

For Reference

NOT TO BE TAKEN FROM THIS ROOM

Ex LIBRIS
UNIVERSITATIS
ALBERTAEENSIS



THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

WAVES AND WANDERERS:
THE ANGLO-SAXONS AND THE SEA

by



Anthony Flemming-Blake

A THESIS SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

MASTER OF ARTS

DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH

EDMONTON, ALBERTA

FALL, 1972

Thesis
72A-71

UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA

FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research for acceptance a thesis entitled Waves and Wanderers: The Anglo-Saxons and The Sea, submitted by Anthony Flemming-Blake in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

ABSTRACT

It is the aim of this thesis to explore the numerous references to the sea that are found in Anglo-Saxon literature. In the introductory chapter the state of the Anglo-Saxons' sea technology and their world view will be discussed in order to understand better how the Anglo-Saxons viewed the sea. In Chapter I the important role of the sea in Beowulf, the longest extant poem in Old English literature, will be looked at. In this chapter I propose to show that it is Beowulf's unique ability to deal with the sea as much as his feats of monster-slaying that makes him a hero. Chapter II will deal with the dominant moods of hostility and storm that characterize the sea in this literature. Chapter III will concern itself with showing that most Anglo-Saxon sea scenes are coastal scenes and that the stormy tempestuous seas were used as a yardstick by which man's courage could be measured. The influences of Christianity upon the Anglo-Saxon view of the sea will be dealt with in Chapter IV, where it will be shown that divine control of the waters aggrandized the Christian God while reducing the power of the sea itself.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

At this juncture I care to express my very real gratitude to Professor Martin Oordt of the University of Lethbridge, whose lively presentation of Aelfric's Colloquy and Beowulf led to my initial interest in this area of studies, and to Professor Raymond Grant of the University of Alberta, who more than kept alive this interest by an excellent undergraduate class and two very interesting graduate seminars, and whose suggestions have been an incalculable help in the preparation of this thesis.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	page
Abstract	iii
Acknowledgements	iv
Introduction	1
Chapter	
I The Sea in Beowulf	8
II The Cruel Sea	35
III The Sea as a Measure of Man	55
IV The Sea and Christianity	72
Conclusion	84
Footnotes	86
Bibliography	95

INTRODUCTION

The sea has excited man's imagination since time immemorial. It was from the sea that the first forms of life crawled onto this earth, and thus it is not without a degree of justice that it has been called the "Great Mother," and that names for this deity such as "Mara," "Miriam" or "Myrna" are connected with mare, the Latin word for the sea.¹ In all ages, throughout the world, various rites and ceremonies have been carried out to appease the gods: Alexander the Great sacrificed a bull to Neptune, the Vikings extended such sacrifice to include human life, the keels of the Vikings' longships were run over bodies of bound prisoners in order that the planks would be reddened with blood, and across the world, in the South Pacific, no chieftain's canoe would be launched without an accompanying human sacrifice.

In this day and age, such sacrifices are confined to the breaking of bottles of champagne on the bows of ships at their launchings. The gods no longer hold sway, and the sea itself is no longer an element that commands mankind's respect in quite the same way as it once did. While it is true that the Grimsby trawlerman, the Maritimer, and fishermen the world over still find it an element worthy of the greatest respect, the average citizen of this modern world is unable to understand fully the attitude of respect towards the sea which was held by his ancestors. Such a respect is difficult, if not impossible, to recapture in an age when one can cross a whole ocean in just a few hours. From a height of thirty thousand feet, gigantic breakers appear to be mere ripples and

huge rollers look more fascinating than menacing from the security of a modern luxury liner. Occasionally disasters occur on the high seas and momentarily the sea reasserts its mastery, but on the whole man has overcome the perils it holds by his advances in technology.

Advances in technology, besides taming the sea to a great extent, have also brought about a continual change in man's view of the world as his knowledge about it has steadily increased. In this changing world view the sea has played an ever-diminishing part. Nowadays, with human footprints on the moon and man-made missiles probing other planets, it is difficult for us to imagine the sea as the boundary of the known world. But this is exactly what it was to the Anglo-Saxon.

Very little is actually known about Anglo-Saxon mythology, but one can assume that it was essentially the same as that of the Vikings, which is well recorded in later Icelandic writings. In trying to gain an appreciation of the attitude towards the sea in Anglo-Saxon literature, we must make an attempt at the impossible. All advances in sea technology and knowledge of the earth itself which have taken place in the past thousand years must be held in temporary suspension. In place of such knowledge we must gain an acquaintance, scanty though it may seem in places, with the overall Anglo-Saxon world view, and also be conversant with the small amount of sea technology that the Anglo-Saxons did have at hand with which to face the rigours of the sea. Such an acquaintance with Anglo-Saxon views and knowledge, coupled with voluntary suspension of certain areas of modern knowledge, may bring us closer to the spirit of an Anglo-Saxon audience and aid us in gaining a better understanding of the magnificent exploits of Beowulf, the cautiousness of Ohthere and

the utter loneliness of the seafarer.

To the pagan Anglo-Saxon the earth was middangeard, or Middle Earth, a term which was derived from pagan cosmology wherein the earth, the world of men, was placed between Asgard, the world of gods, and Utgard, the world of the Giants which was a place of chaos. Middle Earth extended as far as the eye could see on every side with the horizon being its limit. At the horizon there was a meeting place of way from both below and above. Though the way to Asgard was impassable because of the flaming bridge of Bifrost, there was nothing to stop a bold man from venturing out beyond Middle Earth into the cold regions of Utgard that extended both beyond and under Middle Earth itself. There were always those heroes around who had evidently made the journey to Utgard. They reported a confused, ill-lit region that was damp and cold and was inhabited by "quasi-human" forms and monsters.² To a people dwelling by the sea the vast sweep of its distant horizon gave a feeling of being encircled by it. Its treacherous storms, coldness and the perpetual darkness of its mysterious, often fatal depths made it a place of chaos and unreason; it was therefore associated more with the shadowy realms of Utgard than with the friendlier land of Middle Earth.

The coming of Christianity did not essentially change the picture. Asgard, with its pantheon of Gods, gave way to heaven; hell took the place of Utgard and Middle Earth stood in the same geographical reference between the two. The Santa Maria was yet to sail from Pagos and Copernicus was yet to be born; the earth was still the centre of a three-tiered universe, and that which lay beyond the horizon was still unknown and to be feared. The encircling sea became the home of monsters

which were associated with Cain and the giants, both representatives of evil in Christian mythology.

Thus to both the pagan and Christian Anglo-Saxon the earth was essentially the same. Though the Conversion brought about a change in the pagan ideas of the hereafter, the here-and-now remained unchanged. Land itself was an area of comparative order, of light and creation, while the sea which lapped its shores was an area of chaos and darkness. These two opposites of order and chaos, light and darkness, are well illustrated in Beowulf, particularly in the song of creation which the scop sings in Heorot, and in the description of Grendel's mere. Both these passages will be fully discussed in the following chapter.

Little is known about the sort of ship the Anglo-Saxons had, but certain developments can be traced from the migration period (400-500) onwards. It would appear that during the migration period at least two types of ship were in use. The Angles and Scandinavians of the Baltic and Norwegian coasts used a ship that was sailless and so low amidships that it would be easily swamped in a heavy sea. The discovery of ships at Kvalsund and Sutton Hoo gives us some fairly accurate information about this type of ship since both date from the migration era. Both ships are actually flat-bottomed rowing boats, a type descended from the Nydam Ship of around 300 A.D.³ The Sutton Hoo ship was some 89 ft. long (the longest vessel yet discovered from this or the later Viking age), its depth amidships was 4 ft. 6 ins. and, since it drew 2 ft. of water "when light,"⁴ there was a freeboard of only 2 ft. 6 in. between its occupants and the awesome ocean. The Saxons and the Jutes, on the other hand, seemed to have ships that had sails; therefore, though their ships were

no bigger, they could at least sail before the storm. Procopius, when stating that the Angles had no sails, seems surprised, and so implies that the other tribes in the area, including the Saxons and the Jutes, had them.⁵ Later on Anglian ships also had sails. Sail or no sail, however, the Anglo-Saxon ship was in reality nothing more than a big, open, rowing boat whose occupants were at the mercy of the weather.⁶

Another difficulty which faced the Anglo-Saxon was that of navigation. In the past 1,500 years the art of navigation has been much improved and its dangers so minimized that we easily forget the perils it held for those who sailed from the friendly land. The Anglo-Saxon period was before such navigational aids as the clock or the chart, and the Anglo-Saxons sailed a sea that has always been known for its bad weather. The North Sea was indeed a veritable part of Utgard with its fogs, strong tides, shifting shoals and gales. It seems, therefore, that wherever possible the Anglo-Saxons followed the coastline; many voyages, which on a modern map would appear to be short affairs, took longer than we would imagine. It is conjectured that some voyages of the Angles with their rowing ships must have taken six or seven months in rough weather.⁷ Six months in an open boat while tackling the North Sea from Denmark to England is a far cry from a day's voyage in comfortable ships of far greater proportions which nowadays traverse the same sea.

A good description of such coastal sailing is given in the interpolated sections of the Alfredian Orosius, which are devoted to the voyages of Ohthere and Wulfstan in the latter half of the ninth century. The following extract is from Ohthere's first voyage, which was an exploratory one to the far north of Norway where he doubled the North

Cape and reached the White Sea.

He sæde þæt he æt sumum cirre wolde fandian hu longe þæt land norþryhte læge, oppe hwæðer ænig mon be nordan þæm westenne bude. ⁊ a for he norþryhte be þæm lande: let him ealne weg þæt weste land on dæt steorbord, 7 þa widsæon dæt bæcbord þrie dagas. ⁊ a wæs he swa feor norþ swa þa hwælhuntas firrest farap. ⁊ a for he þagiet norþryhte swa feor swa he meahte on þæm oprum þrim dagum gesiglan. ⁊ a beag þæt land þær eastryhte, oppe seo sæ in on dæt lond, he nysse hwæðer; buton he wisse dæt he ðær bād westanwindes 7 hwon norþan, 7 siglde ða east be lande swa swa he meahte on feower dagum gesiglan. ⁊ a sceolde he ðær bidan ryhtnorþanwindes, for ðæm þæt land beag þær supryhte, . . .⁸

[He said that, at a certain time, he wished to find out how far the land extended due north; or whether any man dwelt to the north of the waste. Then he sailed due north along the coast: he kept, all the way, the waste land on his starboard, and the wide sea on his port, for three days. Then was he as far north as the whale-hunters go at their farthest. He then sailed yet due north, as far as he could sail in the next three days. Then the land bent there due east, or the sea in on the land, he knew not whether; but he knew that he there waited for a wind due west and a little to the north, and sailed then east along the coast, as far as he could sail in four days. Then he had to wait there for a due north wind, because the land bent there due south, . . .]

Here we see a great reliance on land and sail. The wind has to come from the right direction before Ohthere can proceed; twice he waits for it and only when the wind allows him to sail be lande does he go on. Though he is willing and eager to explore the land, he is not willing to leave sight of it and explore the reaches of the sea. Even in his second voyage, which is to the south and not of an exploratory nature, Ohthere hugs the land, stating that ealle þa hwile he sceal seglian be lande. In this account, Ohthere states that the voyage from his northern Norwegian home to Schleswig could not be done in less than a month and so gives us an idea of the problems that distance posed to the inhabitants of the Anglo-Saxon middangeard.

In Wulfstan's voyage, too, we feel that land is kept in sight all the way, even though the journey takes place in the inland, tideless Baltic. Wulfstan catalogues the various lands that 'pass by' on either side of his ship. Though this catalogue may be inserted for geographical description and to give authenticity to his voyage, one cannot help feeling that the lands are close to port or starboard.

To both Ohthere and Wulfstan the shore, in the absence of instruments of accurate navigation, was very important. The sea was, and is, very much the same wherever one may be. It has no distinguishing "seamarks," but not so the land! The very word "landmark" implies recognition, which in turn implies the known.

In Anglo-Saxon cosmology the land with its known landmarks such as cliffs, rivers and bays was the friendly part of middangeard while the sea with its treacherous tides and its storms was very much an unknown quantity and, as such, was an alien element--a halfway house between middangeard and Utgard. In the chapters that follow, one must keep in mind the smallness of the Anglo-Saxon world and the corresponding vastness of the sea in order to appreciate better the feelings of an Anglo-Saxon audience when they hear, for instance, of Beowulf's swimming match with Breca. To them Beowulf was not merely adventuring out into the North Sea, an arm of the Atlantic Ocean on a global world, but was daring that alien region of chaos--be it Utgard or Hell--that bounded their friendly middangeard.

Chapter I

THE SEA IN BEOWULF

Any discussion of the sea in Old English poetry would be incomplete without a chapter that concerned itself with the sea's particular role in Beowulf. Beowulf has been called "the first and finest expression of the sea-spirit in Old English Poetry."¹ Such a statement is perhaps not without cause, since the sea is ubiquitous in Beowulf and indeed informs the whole poem. From hron-rāde as early as line 10 to wēg liðendum of line 3158, the sea ebbs and flows through the poem; its roar is hardly ever out of earshot. Though little of the main action of the poem actually takes place out on the open sea, the exploits that are described are those which are performed by the weder or sāe Geats--in particular by their leader Beowulf. Therefore, in a work which deals with the exploits of the leader of a people to whom the very name of "sea" or "storm" has been affixed, one may well expect that an important part should be reserved for the sea itself. One's expectations are realized, because the very presence of the sea is what makes the poem what it is; without the sea Beowulf would be unable to achieve the heroic stature that is his. Of course, to be a hero would still be possible, but without the encircling sea, full of its emissaries from Utgard or Hell, the chaos to which Beowulf gives battle would be immeasurably weakened. Indeed, without the sea, the hero would be of an entirely different sort, since Beowulf's unique greatness lies as much in his ability to conquer the sea, and thus be a veritable lagu cræftig man,² as in his prowess

as a slayer of monsters.

The encircling aspect of the sea, which, as we have seen, was so much a part of the Anglo-Saxon world-picture, is very present in Beowulf. Such a world-picture is voiced in no uncertain terms by the scop at the celebration of Heorot's construction. According to him,

. . . sē Ælmihtiga eordan worhte
 wlite-beorhtne wang, swā wæter bebūgeð:
 gesette sige-hrēþig sunnan ond mōnan
 lēoman tō lēohte land-būendum,
 ond gefrætwade foldan scēatas
 leomum ond lēafum; līf ēac gesceōp
 cynna gehwylcum, para ðe cwice hwyrfap.³ (92-98)

[. . . the Almighty made the earth, a fair
 and bright plain, which water encompasses,
 and triumphing in power, appointed the
 radiance of the sun and moon as light for
 the land-dwellers, and decked the
 earth-regions with branches and leaves.
 He fashioned life for all kinds that live
 and move.]⁴

Here the distinction between the land and the sea is quite clear. The earth is specifically the Lord's creation; it is fair and made to blossom, while the water, the sea which surrounds it, would appear to be neither fair nor fruitful. No adjectives denoting barrenness or hostility are fixed to the noun in the phrase swā wæter bebūgeð, but with so much emphasis being placed on the friendliness of the land, such adjectives hover in the background. Because the fact that the earth is a bright and fruitful plain under a radiant sun and moon is stressed, the solitary noun wæter is given a certain starkness. In such a juxtaposition there is the implication that the water is the opposite of the land. We gain the impression that it is very much an unknown quantity which in the

very act of encompassing the land threatens it. The scop sings a song of creation, but creation of things on the land or for the land. The word land-būendum gives added force to the feeling that the sea, and hence the creatures that dwell therein, are not part of the bright created world: Such a feeling is intensified when we read the Breca episode and when we meet Grendel and his mother.

The encircling aspect of the sea is reinforced elsewhere in the poem, particularly by use of the phrase be sǣm twēonum which occurs four times in the poem (ll. 858, 1297, 1685, 1956). In all four instances this phrase is used in connection with good deeds and the fame and exaltation that might accrue for the heroes performing them. Man gains fame by good deeds, but such fame is limited to the earth. As the land is enclosed by the sea, so too is the fame of men who dwell on it. To the Anglo-Saxons fame and honour were important; that which held such things in check, therefore, was to them a very strong barrier indeed. Wealhtheow is very explicit in her speech to Beowulf when she says,

Hafast þu gefēred, þæt t̃ ðē feor ond nēah
ealne wīde-ferhþ weras ehtigað,
efne swā sīde swā sǣ bebuġeoð
wind-geard, weallas.

(1221-1224)

[Thou hast brought it to pass that men will
magnify thee far and near to all eternity,
even more widely as the sea, the home of the
winds, surrounds the cliffs.]

In time Beowulf's fame will know no bounds, but in space it will extend only as far as the shore.

Along with this feeling of being encircled by the sea there is also a feeling of the sea's expanses in the poem. Again this is not

surprising in view of the world-picture of the Anglo-Saxons and the state of their sea-technology. As has been discussed in Chapter I, their ships were often not much more than big boats from which one may well have looked up at the waves than down upon them. A day's journey was often arduous, with comparatively little gained in distance, and the shoreline would probably be hugged. Thus to the Anglo-Saxons the expanse of the sea would be magnified, for the sea was boundless and at the edge of the world. Such a view is clearly set forth at Scyld Scefing's funeral where we learn that his people

. . . lēton holm beran,
gēafon on gār-secg; him wæs geōmor sefa,
murnende mōd. Men ne cunnon
secgan tō sōðe, sele-ræden[d]e,
hæleð under heofenum, hwā þæm hlæste onfēng.
(48-52)

[. . . let the sea bear him,--gave him to the
ocean. Their soul was sad, their spirit
sorrowful. Counsellors in hall, mighty men
beneath the heavens cannot say truly who
received that load.]

The best and wisest men of the Anglo-Saxon hearth were baffled by the sea. It was part of the great unknown, the edge of which unceasingly lapped the shores of their friendly middangeard.

This feeling of the expanse of the sea is reiterated elsewhere in the poem. The word begang is used three times. Twice the sea that lies between the Danes and Geats is referred to as an expanse--geofenes begang (l. 362) and flōða begang (l. 126). These phrases help to emphasize the sincerity of Beowulf's mission and the strength of the friendship between the two nations. The third time that this word is used occurs when it refers to the sea across which Beowulf has to swim in

order to reach his home from Frisia. Here, coupled with the fact that Beowulf carries thirty coats of armour, the word helps to emphasize the hero's superhuman strength.

The kenning hron-rād [whale-road] (l. 10), which is the very first reference to the sea in the poem, also excites a feeling of expanse. Both Caroline Brady and Adrien Bonjour feel that this is an apt word to use when describing the rule of Scyld Scefing since it suggests the extent and "sovereign might" of Scyld's sway. Miss Brady states:

Hronrād here imparts less the limitless, trackless aspects of the ocean than it does the breadth, the expanse. By its use in this passage the poet appears to suggest the extent of Scyld's sway: not merely the near-neighbours, but all the peoples dwelling around, across the ocean, were forced to accept his dominion and pay tribute to him.⁵

Adrien Bonjour, while agreeing with Miss Brady's suggestions, adds a thought of his own when he says of the whale, ". . . is it not also suggestive of strength, of sovereign might--a power all the more imposing in that its realms are the infinite spaces of multitudinous seas?"⁶

Though both Brady and Bonjour are right in their conjectures, they have missed another very important reason for the fitness of this kenning: it describes the power and the extent of the sea itself, and with or without Scyld Scefing, it is a worthy word with which to introduce the sea into the poem because in the following 3000 lines Beowulf gives battle several times to both the expanse of the sea and the powerful forces that make it their home. The whale to the Anglo-Saxon was a creature which was frecne and ferðgrim fareðlacendum (The Whale, l. 5) in a particular way. In the Anglo-Saxon bestiary the

whale is depicted as a deceitful creature which suddenly brings about chaos by plunging ships into the depths of the sea when seamen mistake it for an island. Therefore in the Anglo-Saxon mind the whale was linked very much with the chaotic and uncertain aspects of the sea.

That the sea is the home of chaos in the poem cannot be gainsaid. Chaos, in mythology, is both that confusion which existed before the act of creation when the universe was set in order and also the forces of that confusion and disorder that exist to the present day. In the song of creation in Beowulf the sea surrounds the created and blessed earth. Throughout the poem the forces of confusion and chaos, in the shape of purposely ill-defined monsters, are closely connected with the sea in one way or another. Grendel and his mother are amphibious creatures, living in the sea but creating havoc on land. They are creatures of "destruction" that carry confusion into the very heart of creation, into Heorot.

The dragon, though it does not live in the sea itself, lives by it. The barrow in which the dragon lives is an interesting place. According to Herbert G. Wright, the barrow ". . . is singular in that a stream gushes forth from within, and so the eorðdraca in one way or another is never far from water, even if he does not live in it like the sædracan (1426)."⁸ The stream by the dragon's barrow is important because it forms a link that establishes the dragon's connection with the sea, for, though the dragon is an eorðdraca, its umbilical cord, the stream, is still there connecting it to the mother sea.

Another aspect in which the dragon is connected to the sea and chaos is that of darkness. Before the creation of light there was chaos,

and darkness was part of it. In Beowulf the creatures of chaos naturally prefer the regions of darkness over those of light, and the sea is much associated with darkness. This clash between light and darkness pervades the whole poem. Once more we must try to shake off the influence of the twentieth century and try to recapture the way the Anglo-Saxons felt about the dark. Wright states that they were a people ". . . largely concerned with agriculture and scantily provided with artificial light, [who] watched sunrise and sunset with an interest less common in a complex, urban society."⁹

Darkness, to the Anglo-Saxon, was firmly ranged on the side of chaos, and this is clearly reflected in Beowulf where darkness, chaos and the sea, particularly its depths, go hand in hand. In the song of creation we learn that the sun and the moon shine specifically for the "land-dwellers" (l. 95); the uncreated sea, by implication, is left out in the dark. Beowulf's encounters with the demons from the sea take place mainly in darkness. In his introductory speech to Hrothgar he says, "ond on yðum slōg/ niceras nihtes" (ll. 421-422). This ability is confirmed in the Breca episode in which the main struggle with the monsters takes place in the sea at night. The fight with Grendel, a creature from the sea, is once again at night, and though the fight against Grendel's mother occurs in the daytime, it takes place in the dark recesses of a cave at the bottom of the mere where a hellish fire and not the sun, "the candle of the Lord," is the source of light. The only exception to this pattern is the fight with the dragon. In this case the time of day is not stated, but it would appear to take place during the day. The dragon is an ŋht-sceaða (l. 2271) who flies by night.

That the dragon cannot attack by day is made perfectly clear when we read that

. . . Hord-weard onbād
 earfoðlice, oððæt æfen cwōm.
 Wæs ðā gebolgen beorges hyrde,
 wolde se lāða lige forgyldan
 drinc-fæst dyre. Ðā wæs dæg sceacen
 wyrme on willan; nō on wealle læ[n]g
 bīdan wolde, ac mid bāle fōr,
 fyre gefȳsed.

(2302-2309)

[The guardian of the hoard waited with difficulty till evening came. Then was the lord of the barrow bursting with rage, the evil beast meant to requite with fire the theft of the costly drinking-bowl. Then day departed, as the dragon wished; no longer would he watch upon the side of the barrow, but he went forth with flame, furnished with fire!]

Though the dragon rages, a powerful force, namely light, keeps him in check. Once daylight wanes, the eald ðht-sceaða goes about his business of performing deeds of destruction. After a night out on the land, however, he must scurry back to his barrow:

. . . Hord eft gescēat,
 dryht-sele dyrne ær dæges hwīle.
 (2319-2320)

[He hastened back to his hoard again,
 his secret hall, ere the time of day;
 . . .]

The mere, the home of Grendel and the scene of Beowulf's greatest trial in the first part of the poem, is the darkest place in the poem. The lines describing this place have been much praised by critics.

C. L. Wrenn writes that they constitute ". . . the most remarkable piece of natural description in the poem, in which the mysterious yet vivid details are made to produce an atmosphere of desolation and doom."¹⁰

Whether or not the mere is part of the sea has been a point of some critical controversy. The great depth of the mere, the presence of nickers and the use of such words as holm, yð and sund convince me that the poet meant to depict it as a kind of extension of the sea, no matter where it might be situated geographically. It is certainly part of that outlandish world which surrounded the Anglo-Saxon middangeard.¹¹

In contrast to the song of creation, with its joyous description of an earth decked with plenty, the lines which describe the mere can be recognised as those which attempt to come to grips with that dreaded world of Utgard or Hell which surrounded the earth. The audience of Beowulf must have been chilled by the description of this body of water and the forbidding landscape around it. To the Anglo-Saxon the unknown was always a threatening proposition, so that the scop awakes feelings of apprehension when he states "Hie dýgel lond/ warigeað," and maintains this tension as he continues:

" . . . wulf-hleopu, windige næssas,
 "frēcne fen-gelād, ðær fyr-gen-strēam
 "under næssa genipu niper gewiteð,
 "flōd under foldan. Nis þæt feor heonon
 "mīl-gemearces, þæt sē mere standeð
 "ofer þāem hongiað hrinde bearwas;
 "wudu wurtum fæst wæter oferhelmað.
 "ðær maeg nihta gehwām nīð-wundor sēon,
 "fyr on flōde; nō þæs frōd leofað
 "gumena bearna þæt þone grund wite.
 "Deah þe hæð-stapa hundum geswenced,
 "heorot hornum trum holt-wudu sēce,
 "feorran geflymed, ær hē feorh seleð,

"aldor on ðfre, ær hē in wille,
 "hafelan [*hȳdan*]. Nis þæt hēoru stōw;
 "ponon ȳð-geblond ūp āstigeð
 "won tō wolcnum, þonne wind styrep
 "lād gewidru, oðþæt lyft ðrysmap,
 "roderas rēotað. . . ."

(1358-1376)

[They dwell in a land unknown, wolf haunted slopes, wind-swept headlands, perilous marsh paths, where the mountain stream goes under the mists of the cliffs,--a flood under the earth. It is not far hence, in miles, that the lake stands over which hang groves covered with frost: the wood, firm rooted, overshadows the water.

There may be seen each night a fearful wonder,--fire on the flood! Of the sons of men none lives so wise as to know the bottom. Although, pressed by the hounds, the ranger of the heath, the hart strong in its horns, may seek the forest, chased from far, he will give up his life, his being, on the brink, sooner than he will plunge in it to save his head. That is no pleasant spot. Thence rises up the surging water darkly to the clouds, when the wind stirs up baleful storms, until the air grows misty, the heavens weep.]

The terrifying thing about this description is the indefiniteness of everything; it is not so much a description of the mere as an attempt at description. The mere is an unknown quantity and so escapes exact definition. Any description of the place, therefore, is by suggestion rather than by any setting down of facts. We learn far more about the landscape around the mere than about the mere itself. Nothing is learnt about the mere's size and only a dire hint is given as to its depth. The one overriding impression that we get from the passage is the suggestion of unspeakable unnatural evil that lurks in its confines. The very existence of the place seems to violate the natural order of

things so that creatures of nature face certain death within the boundaries of their own savage world rather than enter its depths.

The mere is not only part of the sea but is presented to us as a miniature sea wherein evil is concentrated. Its unknown depths recall the unknown fate of Scyld's funeral barge. In both cases, the wisest men in society are baffled and the boundaries of knowledge are exposed. Like the vast ocean, the mere is inhabited by numerous monsters, and as Beowulf in the Breca episode descends to the bottom of the larger ocean to cleanse the seaways of monsters, so too must he descend to the bottom of this incredible lake of unknown depth and with headlands big enough to accommodate many monsters.

At the mere we find a concentration of evil that is more diffuse in the larger ocean. At Scyld's funeral the unknown limits of the sea cause no immediate anxiety, but the unknown limits of the mere definitely take on a supernatural and evil significance with the fearful wonder of "the fire on the flood." Also, the monsters in the Breca episode, fearful though they may be, are without that moral stigma which is specifically attached to Grendel and his mother. Though all the monsters are part of that brood which earned the wrath of the Lord,¹² it is the Grendel family, the monsters in the mere, that are singled out by the poet and linked directly with Caines cynne (l. 107). The mere is not only part of the sea but the sea at its worst. Its monsters are not only representatives of a prevalent natural evil, but also of a human-born moral disorder that links them inextricably and hence more threateningly to mankind.

Monsters, to the modern mind, are relegated to the realm of fantasy, which is occasionally excited by a reported sighting from Loch

Ness. To the Anglo-Saxons, however, they were as real as the sea itself. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, a rather prosaic account of day-to-day happenings, records in its annals for the year 793 the following:

Her wæron reðe forebecna cumene ofer Norðanhymbra land, and
 þ[æt] folc earmlice bregdon. ⁊ [æt] wæron ormete lig ræscas
 and wæron ge seowene fyrene dracan on þam lyfte fleogende.¹³

[In this year dire portents appeared over Northumbria and sorely frightened the people. They consisted of immense whirlwinds and flashes of lightning, and fiery dragons were seen flying in the air.]¹⁴

This matter-of-fact recording of monsters shows the state of popular belief. Monsters were accepted and believed in to such an extent that the age must surely be the envy of those who today support the theory of Unidentified Flying Objects. Dr. Whitelock makes a valid point when she states: "Perhaps the strongest evidence of all for belief in monsters is that it was found necessary to fit them into a Christian universe."¹⁵

Monsters to the Anglo-Saxons were not figments of the imagination but were inhabitants of those regions that lay on the horizon. Often they were seen as emissaries from the nether world whose excursions into the bright world of middangeard were much to be feared. In Beowulf the monsters are denizens of the deep and they link the sea even more closely to moral disorder.

The sea in Beowulf is also far from accommodating in terms of physical comfort. It is not only the frontier between the known and the unknown, the home of monsters, but it also exhibits a more direct hostility through its welling turbulence and coldness, which are two features of the sea that are emphasized. Only on rare occasions in the poem is the sea presented as a calm body of water. In the Breca episode,

where the sea is pictured the most fully in the poem, it is a stormy ocean to which both Unferth and Beowulf refer. Unferth indicates both the water's unsettled state and its coldness when he talks of geofon ȳpum wēol/ wintrys wylm[um] (ll. 515-516). In Beowulf's reply there is much the same description when he refers to

"wado weallende, wedera cealdost,
 "nīpende niht, ond norþan wind
 "heaðo-grim . . ."
 (546-548)

[. . . the tossing seas, the bitter-cold
 weather, the darkening night and the
 fierce north wind . . .]

Predictably the mere, too, is always in an unsettled state--till it is cleansed by Beowulf. After Grendel's death it becomes almost animated in its agitation:

Ðær wæs on blōde brim weallende,
 atol ȳða geswing, eal gemenged,
 hāton heolfre, heoro-drēore wēol; . . .
 (847-849)

[Then the water was boiling with blood,
 the frightful surge of the waves welled
 up, all mingled with hot gore,--with
 sword-blood; . . .]

The mere is in a similar mood the next day when the Danes and Geats visit it after the ravages of Grendel's mother have taken place, and Beowulf mentions its unsettled state in his account to Hygelac.¹⁶

This view of an unpleasantly turbulent and cold sea holds true in other episodes which are introduced into the story and which are further removed from the central action than the Breca episode. It is

a very inhospitable sea that is depicted in the lay of Hnæf and Hengest. This lay is sung by Hrothgar's minstrel in celebration of Beowulf's victory over Grendel amid scenes of festivity and rejoicing in a warm hall. The lay is obscure to a modern audience, since it makes passing references to events which have long been forgotten but which were familiar to audiences at the poem's genesis. Yet at one point the bard undoubtedly succeeds in gaining the audience's sympathy when he depicts Hengest's plight in facing the all-too-familiar cruel sea. Hengest is, as Anne Treneer points out,

. . . a defeated stranger in the Frisians' land, [who] looks over the sea and longs for his home and revenge. He cannot drive his vessel over the waves because they are darkened with storms, and then winter binds them with ice.¹⁷

The cold, wintry, ice-bound sea and the stormy, surging billows, which are often mentioned alongside one another, make a curious juxtaposition of agitated movement and deathly calm. It is, however, a juxtaposition of extremes that is understandable. A storm at sea was a hazardous experience to the Anglo-Saxons who faced it in their open boats. Therefore it is not surprising that attention was fixed on this aspect of a sea which even today is known for its truculent moods. For similar reasons the stress on the sea's coldness is also not too surprising. The cold and its attendant hardships were conditions with which the Anglo-Saxons were very well acquainted. Once again their open boats would afford but little shelter from the bitingly cold sea winds. Even on land the hearth would but do its best to give comfort in a draughty hall. The discomfort of the cold and icy water was an experience held in common, for sympathy is extended even to a creature such as Grendel's

mother when the poet states rather laconically that it is her miserable lot to be consigned to the "dread waters, chilling streams. . . ."18

Besides being dark, cold, stormy and the refuge of monsters, the vast, encircling sea in Beowulf also contains the threat of human invaders. This danger, unlike that presented by Grendel, does not need a hero of Beowulf's stature but can be guarded against by coastguards. When Beowulf's band arrives at Hrothgar's kingdom, the first person they meet is the coastguard. Significantly he is called an ende-sæta (l. 241). He sits at the end of Hrothgar's kingdom looking out into the unknown, ensuring that no harm may come unawares from it, particularly in the form of human invaders. The fact that he does not spare the time to guide the band right up to Heorot but hurries back to the coast indicates that his job was not to be taken lightly. That invasion from the sea was an ever-present threat is well attested to in other parts of the poem. Scyld Scefing must have carried out many a maritime excursion against the ymb-sittendra (l. 9), and Hygelac's forays against the Frisians and Ogentheow show that sea invasions, despite the rigours that had to be faced, were much a reality of the times. One must remember also that Beowulf was composed for a people who in the not-too-distant past had conquered the better part of the island of Britain through similar means.

All in all, the sea in Beowulf is very much part of the outer hostile world that surrounded the Anglo-Saxon hearth. J. R. R. Tolkien sums up the poem's world view when he says that the scop and the audience

. . . were thinking of the eormengrund, the great earth, ringed with garsecg, the shoreless sea, beneath the sky's inaccessible roof; whereon, as in a little circle of light about their halls, men with courage as their stay went forward to that battle with the hostile world and the offspring of the dark which ends for all, even the kings and champions, in defeat.¹⁹

When one considers the dangers inherent in the sea, it is only a courageous group of men who will go "forward to that battle with the hostile world" and face its trials head on in their wudu bundenne (l. 216). The fact of their sea journey is sufficient cause for Beowulf and his men to be accorded a certain amount of respect at Heorot. This respect is gained before there is any encounter with Grendel or his mother. When announcing the arrival of the band at Heorot, Wulfgar stresses the fact that they have come by sea. He announces,

"Hēr syndon geferede, feorran cumene
 "ofer geofenes begang Gēata lēode; . . .
 (361-362)

[People of the Geats, come from far, over
 the seas have voyaged higher; . . .]

Wulfgar goes to the hall door to make Beowulf and his retainers welcome; he once again mentions the voyage and delicately links it with their bravery when he says,

". . . one gē him syndon ofer sǣ-wylmas,
 "heard-hicgende, hider wil-cuman.
 (393-394)

[. . . and that ye men of brave intent are
 welcome to him hither over the sea-billows.]

This association of Beowulf and his men with the sea is continued during their stay at Heorot. Though the outward voyage has been easy, we learn nevertheless that the band is sǣ-mepe (l. 325) and Beowulf refers to his men as sǣ-līpēnde (l. 1818). The arms of Beowulf's band are called sǣ-manna searo (l. 329), and in the encounter with Unferth Beowulf is referred to as a brave seafarer--modges mere-faran (l. 502).

While Beowulf anxiously awaits the approach of Grendel, we are told that he has many a snellic sæ-rinc (l. 690) with him. By the use of these terms, the scop invests the band with dignity. All these references scattered here and there have an accumulative effect, so that Beowulf's warriors attain a respect that is their own; it is a respect given by people who know the perils of the sea to people who have braved these perils. The glory of Beowulf's followers, therefore, is not absolutely dependent on the actions of their leader. The sea is a measure of manhood and they have already acquitted themselves to a reasonable degree by completing the voyage to Heorot. They have successfully traversed the cold and the dark outside the circle of light in their mead halls and are consequently all heroes, albeit of a lesser variety, in their own right.

One safe voyage, however, does not make Beowulf a truly lagu-cræftig man; this has to be proven. The band's ability to tackle a sea voyage does not mean that its leader will be capable of dealing with Grendel, a creature that comes from the sea's very depths. If the surface of the sea can be hostile, its depths with their monsters and treacherous currents are doubly so. Unferth, Hrothgar's counsellor, questions Beowulf's competence to deal with Grendel by remembering a boyhood exploit of Beowulf's in which he and another person challenged the sea. It would appear that in this exploit the other person, Breca, defeated Beowulf. Unferth's attack is subtle. He admits that Beowulf has had much success on land, but he points out that Beowulf was bested at sea when he states:

" . . . hē þē æt sundre oferflāt,
 "hæfde mære mægen; . . .
 " Bēot eal wid þē
 "sunu Bēanstānes sōðe gelæste.
 "Ðonne wēne ic tō þē wyrsan geþingea,
 "ðeah þū heaðo-ræsa gehwær dohte,
 "grimre gūðe, gif þū Grendles dearst
 "niht-longne fyrst nēa[ha]n bīdan."
 (517-518; 523-528)

[. . . he overcame thee at swimming: he had greater strength. . . . The son of Beanstan performed faithfully in the contest with thee all that he had pledged himself to. So I expect from thee a worse issue,--though thou hast everywhere prevailed in rush of battle, stern war,--if thou darest await Grendel at close quarters for the space of a night.]

The full import of Unferth's attack is appreciated when we realize the amphibious nature of Grendel. If Beowulf, no matter how successful he may be against land-enemies, can be beaten by a fellow man in a contest of strength in the sea, then it augurs ill for his ability to survive an encounter with a sea creature of Grendel's calibre. This attack, following Beowulf's introductory speech to Hrothgar in which he states "ond on yðum slōg/ niceras nihtes" (ll. 421-422), carries with it more than a hint of disbelief.

Unferth's attitude to the sea is of some significance. He is Hrothgar's pyle, an office which has caused some debate among critics. In a recent article, Joseph L. Baird states that the title is a pagan one which was given to priests of Odin and that the character of Unferth arose "somewhere back in the dark matrix whence the poem arose. . . ."20 Unferth's office is an honourable one, and though in this exchange with Beowulf he is condemned to hell because he is apparently guilty of fratricide, he is redeemed later on. At the feast celebrating Grendel's

death, specific mention is made of Unferth's presence:

. . . Swylce þær Unferþ pyle
 æt fōtum sæt frēan Scyldinga; gehwylc hiora his ferhþe
 trēowde,
 þæt hē hæfde mōd micel, . . .
 (1165-1167)

[Moreover there sat Unferth the spokesman at the
 Scylding chieftain's feet; all of them trusted in his
 spirit, that he had much courage, . . .]

Unferth is neither the coward nor the blackguard he may seem at first sight; since he is a respected member of heroic society, his attitude towards the sea is interesting and informative. His point of view is that "Beowulf's contest with Breca was a foolish one in which Beowulf's life was at stake on account of idle boasting and vainglory."²¹

Given that the heroic age was a time when many deeds were performed for the fame that they would bring the participants, it is a very harsh judgement that is passed by Unferth. Though it is dramatically fit for Unferth to question Beowulf here, one notices the method of attack. Unferth has a healthy respect for the sea and challenges Beowulf's wisdom in combatting its realms. Unferth is only human and, unlike Beowulf, cannot do battle beneath the sea; therefore he further redeems himself by lending Beowulf his sword Hrunting with which to tackle Grendel's mother. One cannot help feeling a certain amount of sympathy for Unferth when one reads that

. . . selfa ne dorste
 under yða gewin aldre genēþan,
 drihtscype drēogan; þær hē dōme forlēas,
 ellen-*maerdum*. Ne wæs þā m oðrum swā,
 syðþan hē hine tō gūðe gegyred hæfde.
 (1468-1472)

[Himself he dared not risk his life beneath
the tumult of the waves,--accomplish deeds of
prowess. There he lost his fame,--renown for
valour. Not thus was it with that other,
when he had made ready for the fray.]

The courage and strength of Unferth, like that of the rest of the Danes, stop at the sea and at the terrifying things which emerge from its depths.

Beowulf's answer to Unferth is important, because in it he makes clear that, unlike Unferth, he is not at all intimidated by the sea. This answer establishes his ability as a lagu-cræftig man and, through this quality, his claim to true heroic greatness. According to Beowulf there was no race or contest with Breca; it was merely an adventure by youth, as W. W. Lawrence puts it, "on the wintry sea, swept with storms and beset with monsters."²² To undertake to swim on the ocean under such conditions was heroic exploit enough without there being a race. Beowulf mentions his struggle with the monsters in which he was dragged down to the floor of the ocean where he slew no less than nine monsters. This descent to the bottom of the ocean is the first indication we have of his true prowess in water. This ability to survive in the depths of the ocean places Beowulf in the ranks of heroes who, though they are not gods, are clearly a rank above the common man. Once again the sea is the measure of man. This time it is a yardstick by which we can measure Beowulf's strength and heroism.

Beowulf's ability to descend to the ocean floor is more than just a touch for dramatic effect. In the poem there is a distinction made between the surface of the sea and its depths. The depths are, of course, always dark and are the home of monsters; consequently, they are ranged

firmly on the side of evil, whereas the surface of the sea presents a slightly less evil picture. Though the surface of the sea is often stormy and hostile, it can also be calm. Its particular mood is usually contingent on the dramatic function that it has to perform in various parts of the poem. Indeed the surface of the sea shows two faces in the poem while its depths are always hostile.

Strife and gloom permeate Beowulf. It is a poem of struggle between man and monster and between man and man, but nestled in the poem's sombre shades there are patches of relief and joy. When the sea is discussed in these passages, it is presented as a pleasant body of water. Beowulf's voyages to and from Heorot occur in such times of joy and relief. Both journeys are completed without incident, and it is in the descriptions of those journeys that the sea is referred to in almost lyrical terms by kennings such as swan-rād (l. 200) and ganotes bæð (l. 1861). Both kennings have gained the attention of critics. Caroline Brady feels that in swan-rād there is no "suggestion of dangers or hazards, of sea-beasts or storms. The sea is thought of simply as an area, a surface, which can be and is crossed with a minimum of difficulty."²³ Ganotes bæð has been called by Bonjour "one of the rarest and imaginatively richest terms for the sea in the poem."²⁴ Miss Brady once again makes an astute observation when she writes that Hrothgar when using this kenning has no wish "to emphasize the distance, the expanse of water between the two peoples; rather, across the peaceful surface of the sea men may exchange gifts."²⁵

This more pleasant aspect of the sea's surface is not left simply to connotations from picturesque kennings but is more directly stated.

The description of Beowulf's voyage to Heorot is a good example.

Gewāt þā ofer wæġholm, winde gefȳsed,
 flota fāmi-heals, fugle gelīcost,
 oðþaet ymb ān-tīd, ōpres dōgores
 wunden-stefna gewaden hæfde,
 þaet ðā liðende land gesāwon,
 brim-clifu blīcan, beorgas stēape,
 sīde sǣ-næssas; þā wæs sund liden,
 ēoletes æt ende.

(217-224)

[Then with foam at its prow, most like
 to a bird, it floated over the billowing
 waves, urged onwards by the wind, until
 in due time on the second day the curved
 prow had journeyed on so far that the
 voyagers saw the land, the sea-cliffs,
 glisten--the steep mountains, the bold
 promontories. Then was the ship at the
 end of its watery way.]

The description is one of eagerness and joy, of speed and ease. The image of the foamy-necked ship is perhaps a reminder of the ring of white around a bird's neck, and the direct comparison with a bird in the term fugle gelīcost refers one back to the kenning swan-rād. The ship is impelled by the wind and the sea offers no resistance; there is not a hint of labour or struggle. The ease of this journey is dramatically fit, for it augurs well for the outcome of the expedition: there is a hint that the expedition is under God's protection. The voyage has been an overnight one out on the open seas, and a glance at the Breca episode leaves us in no doubt as to the dangers of the sea at night. It is not surprising, therefore, that the voyagers should offer up a prayer of thanksgiving at the end of the journey.²⁶ This prayer is more than mere lip service and points to two facts. Though the sea has been calm, this is not a state that can be taken for granted, and secondly, there is the

suggestion that those who have just traversed the regions of chaos unscathed are on a mission that has God's blessing.

The voyage home from Heorot is equally pleasant, and it is dramatically fit that it should be so. Grendel and his mother have been slain, the main strife of the first part of the poem is over, and it is a time of joy during which any further struggle would be anti-climactic.

That the surface of the sea can be calm and pleasant and that this calmness is connected with divine approbation may be seen in the Breca episode where

. . . Lēoht ēastan cōm,
beorht bēacen Godes; brimu swāpredon . . .
(569-570)

[. . . The Sun, bright beacon of God, came
from the east; the waters grew calm, . . .]

The surface of the sea falls under heavenly control without any undue struggle, but control of the sea depths seems to present a different picture. Heavenly control in these vast, dark regions seems to reside in God's champion, Beowulf. In the Breca episode the struggle with the monsters takes place on the ocean floor at night and Beowulf is alone. Only after he has laid waste the enemies and their bodies have apparently floated to the surface does the sun shine through and the turbulent waters become calm. Much the same thing occurs at the mere, where Beowulf once more descends into the depths of the ocean. We have been prepared for this descent by the Breca episode, but even so, the second descent shows Beowulf's water-prowess and bravery even more than the first one.

Both descents of Beowulf are journeys into the heart of darkness in both the moral and natural senses of the word, but at the mere there

are certain factors which heighten the exploit considerably. At the mere there is an atmosphere which harbours a strong sense of the occult. There is a concentration of those forces of evil that for the Anglo-Saxons ever lurked beyond the circles of light in their halls and perhaps lurked in the dark universe beyond the reach of God's candle, the sun. On earth these forces would find safe resting-places in two places, caves and ocean depths, areas that are perpetually dark; significantly, there is a cave at the bottom of the mere. Besides the difference in atmosphere, there is also a difference between the youthful, rash Beowulf of the Breca episode and the more sober, mature man at the mere. In the Breca episode Beowulf is dragged down into the sea's depths against his will, but at the mere he descends voluntarily. This second descent is far more hazardous than the first, and we note that Beowulf, who is not at all sure about the outcome, commits his thanes to Hrothgar's care. The descent itself is a feat, for we are told that

. . . Ðā wæs hwīl dæges,
 ær hē þone grund-wong ongytan mehte.
 (1495-1496)

[It was a good part of the day before he
 could descry the solid bottom.]

With this descent Beowulf journeys further into the heart of darkness than before. At the cave he is in a region of moral chaos and unreason, and this region is in the very depths of the sea.

The fight that takes place in the cave is important since it is the centrepiece of the poem. Here Beowulf, the champion of mankind with divine dispensation, gives battle to the powers of darkness in the shape

of Grendel's mother. Divine intervention here is noticeably less direct than it is in some of the poem's analogues. Intervention seems to lie in the fact that Beowulf is allowed to grasp an Eotenish sword by which he conquers, but the victory still lies very much in the strength of his own arm. In some of the analogues intervention is much more direct. In the Gull-Thoris Saga a ray of light is sent which causes the dragons to sleep, and in the story of Gullbra the ray of light, which is sent in answer to a prayer, turns the adversary, a witch, into stone. Just how Beowulf manages to get to his feet and grasp the sword remains a mystery, and Chambers rightly states: "In Beowulf it is not clear by what instrumentality the divine interposition worked."²⁷

In a summary of the elements common to the poem and the analogues, Chambers makes the following statement:

In all versions save Grettir and Samson the hero is so overmatched that without supernatural help he would have been destroyed. In Beowulf the enemy has got him down, but through God's help he sees a magic sword upon the wall; he rises up, smites off his foe's head; a gleam of light like the sun is shining in the cave.²⁸

Though I realize that it is audacious to take issue with an authority of Chambers' stature, I must protest that such a synopsis is misleading in that it suggests that the gleam of light is what enables Beowulf to see the sword. This is not so. There is a fire in the cave which sheds enough light to see by. The gleam of light, which is God's light, comes shining through only after Grendel's mother has been slain and the mere has been purged from evil. The lines that describe this light suggest that it has divine connections:

Lixte sē lēoma, lēoht inne stōd
 efne swā of hefene hādre scīneð
 rodores candel.

(1570-1572)

[A gleam flashed forth, light was diffused
 within, as when the candle of the firmament
 shines brightly from heaven.]

Rodores candel recalls the phrase beorht beācen Godes (l. 570) in the Breca episode, in which the sun also shines through after the deed has been accomplished and evil subdued. Twice in the poem Beowulf gives battle to evil in the ocean's depths and in winning brings the area under heavenly control. In both encounters the outcome of the battle relies more on Beowulf's might than on divine intervention, and light shines only after the accomplished fact. In this way Beowulf's greatness is emphasized. Here is a hero for whom the sea holds no terrors that cannot be overcome. After having cleansed the mere of Grendel, he is fittingly described as lið-manna helm (l. 1623). He is protector not merely of ordinary people, but also of those men who in Anglo-Saxon society were lesser heroes themselves--the seamen; thus Beowulf is a rank above the rest, and it is his ability to master all the dire forces of the sea that puts him in such a position. Such an ability demands superhuman strength and powers which are of heroic proportions.

The sea in Beowulf is therefore an element that is worth close scrutiny. In the poem the Anglo-Saxon world view is faithfully reflected and the sea is shown as a vast, threatening body of water which encircles the land. Sometimes this body of water is depicted as calm, but more often than not it is shown to be an area of physical discomfort which is both stormy and cold. Besides such physical attributes, the sea,

particularly the mere, is a region of the unknown and the supernatural. It is an area of chaos from which come dangers, both human and non-human, that constantly threaten the essentially friendlier middangeard. Its depths, being perpetually dark unless lit by unnatural light, are naturally associated with those dark, unknown regions whose frontiers were far closer to the Anglo-Saxon than they are to modern man and whence came very real monsters. Therefore, when Beowulf descends to give battle in the sea's depths, the Anglo-Saxons would not only appreciate the physiological feat of such an act but would also be struck by a metaphysical impact that is impossible to recapture totally in today's monsterless world. Being such a hostile region, the sea becomes a yardstick by which mankind's courage can be measured, consequently, those who venture forth on its surface are honoured and accorded dignity and he who can plumb its depths and meet all that this region of chaos has to offer on more-or-less equal terms is naturally painted in exceedingly heroic colours.

Chapter II

THE CRUEL SEA

The sea in the corpus of Anglo-Saxon literature is painted in essentially the same terms as it is in Beowulf. One finds the same cold, dark and stormy ocean in the other works that are extant from the Old English period. It is a raw and uncomfortable sea that surges through the pages of Anglo-Saxon literature; only occasionally do we come across a quiet sea, as in the case of Beowulf's two voyages and perhaps in the voyage of Elene.

The Anglo-Saxons were well aware of the vastness of the sea. It is not surprising that the distance and extent of the ocean should command their attention when we consider their limited means of navigation and rather frail craft. They saw the ocean with the eyes of a people to whom a few miles was a considerable distance. Sometimes a few miles of progress would have to be wrested from an unwilling sea and in such circumstances the breadth of the ocean would indeed seem tremendous. The phrase sidne sæ would have far stronger connotations for the Anglo-Saxon than its equivalent of 'broad sea' has for modern man. This phrase, which is found in Beowulf (l. 507), also occurs in Christ (l. 852). In Elene (l. 728) we read about the sæs sidne fædm, while in The Wonders of Creation (l. 40) we come across sæs sidne grund.

In Andreas the wide expanse of the sea causes an apprehensive reaction on the part of Andrew. He is a faithful servant of the Lord who eventually does as he is bid, but in his answer to the Lord there

is a stress laid on the distance of the journey and the expanse of the ocean:

Hū mæg iċ, Dryhten mīn, ofer dēop gelād
 fōre gefremman on feorrne weg
 swā hraedliċe, heofona Scieppend,
 wuldres Wealdend, swa þū worde becwist?
 þæt mæg engel þīn ief gefōran,
 [hālig] of heofonum cann him holma begang,
 sealte sǣ-strēamas and swan-rāde, . . .¹
 (190-196)

[O God of heaven and Lord of glory
 How can I fare on so far a course
 Over the deep ocean so soon as Thou sayest?
 But this Thine angel may easily do.
 From heaven he sees the ocean stretches,
 All the swan road and the salt stream . . .]²

An Anglo-Saxon audience would well appreciate Andrew's hesitancy. To them the "ocean stretches" were indeed far and to ask a person to voyage over them was perhaps a test of faith in itself. It is interesting to note that the length of the journey is again emphasized when Christ, disguised as a seaman, tells Andrew,

"Wē of Marmedonia mægde sindon
 feorran geferede."³
 (264-265)

[From the Mermedonian folk we have come faring
 On a far journey.]⁴

It may be that in the stressing of the length of this sea journey there is a deliberate evocation of the sympathy of the audience for Andrew. A modern-day reader may well miss this evocation or, at best, receive it in a very weakened state. This is so because our feelings towards the sea, the objective correlative in this instance, have undergone a profound

change during the intervening centuries. Nowadays the "ocean stretches" give way to the reaches of outer space, but to the Anglo-Saxons the phrases fōre gefremman and holma begang carried far greater weight and would thus undoubtedly strike a sympathetic chord among a people who lived by a vast and yet unfathomed sea.

In the phrase sæs sidne fædm we see that the Anglo-Saxons were not only aware of the sea's great vastness but also its great depths. These depths must have held a great fascination for the Anglo-Saxons, because they were an even more alien and unknowable region than the surface of the ocean. The eeriness of the mere in Beowulf lies largely in its great depth and the fact that the poet is at a loss to describe clearly what lies therein. The best that he can do is to give dire hints of the evil that haunts this region, and it is the indefiniteness of the description that gives it its terrifying quality. Another interesting aspect of the word fædm is the connotations it carries of "bosom," "embrace" and "power," since the word's original meaning was the span of a man's outstretched arms.

With an awareness of the sea's extent both in depth and surface area it was natural that the Anglo-Saxons on looking out at the horizon should feel that this vast body of water surrounded them. The phrase be sæm twēonum [between two seas] occurs no less than four times in Beowulf (ll. 858, 1297, 1685, 1956) and is also found twice in Guthlac (ll. 237, 1333) and once in Exodus (l. 443). In discussing its use in Exodus, Irving makes the point that ". . . its widespread occurrence points to the probability that it was a native expression rather than a borrowed phrase."⁵

The Anglo-Saxon world view of a flat earth surrounded by water is once again clearly set forth in the poem The Wonders of Creation, where the poet in talking about the mystery of the setting sun delineates the boundary of Anglo-Saxon geographical knowledge, when he writes,

. . . gewited þonne mid þy wuldre on westrodor
forðmære tungol faran on heape
oppæt on æfenne utgarsecges
grundas pæpæð glōm oþer cigð
niht æfter cymed healdeð nydbibod
halgan dryhtnes heofontorht swegl
scir gescyndeð in gesceaft godes
undan foldan forþm farende tungol
forþon nænig fira þæs frod leofað
pæt his mæge æspringe þurh his ægne sped witan
hu geond grund færed goldtorht sunne
in pæt wonne genip under wætra geþring
oppe hwa þes leohtes londbuende
brucan mote sippan heo ofer brim hweorfeð. . . .
(68-81)

[. . . Then the ever-famous star departs in its splendour
to go with it into the western sky
until in the evening it treads on the [abyss]⁶
of the outer ocean, and calls another twilight forth.
Night follows, and obeys the inexorable decree
of the holy Lord. The clear sun, bright as heaven,
hastens under the bosom of the earth,
a wandering star, into God's universe.
Truly there lives no man so wise
that he can, by his own powers, understand its descent,
how the sun, bright as gold, journeys over the plain
into the wan darkness beneath the surge of the waters;
or what dwellers on land may enjoy its light
after it departs over the sea. . . .]⁷

Here we are presented with the simple Anglo-Saxon world view which to the modern mind may seem filled with the frightening romance of the unknown. It is the obvious view which might be obtained by a coastal people from a daily observation that was unaccompanied by sophistication or science. In this simple picture it is well-nigh

impossible to escape the sea. In the above fourteen lines the sea appears three times; each time we find its dark depths at the edge of the known world forming an impassable barrier. Thus the sea in the Anglo-Saxon world picture played a far more important role than it does in today's cosmology.

The last half-dozen lines of the passage above immediately bring to mind two passages from Beowulf--Scyld Scefing's burial, where no man knows the eventual destination of the funeral ship, and the scop's song of creation in Heorot, where the sun shines specifically for the land dwellers. Once again man stops short at the shore and the sun is explicitly linked with earth dwellers. This latter point will be discussed when the sea's association with darkness is investigated.

It was of little comfort to the Anglo-Saxons to surmise correctly the sea's encirclement and be aware of its vastness, because to them the sea was primarily an inhospitable region. This inhospitability of the sea is well attested to by repeated references to its more unpleasant features such as coldness, storm and darkness.

Cold in particular is especially associated with the sea, for in the days of the Anglo-Saxons it posed a distinctly uncomfortable threat. The inconveniences of the cold are referred to in Andreas, where its companions, rime and frost, are called "hoary warriors" that "lock up the homes of men":

. . . Weder cōlodon
 heardum hægl-scūrum, swelče hrim and forst
 hære hild-stapan, hæleða ædel
 lucon, lēoda gesetu.⁸
 (1256-1259)

[. . . The winds grew chill
With fierce hail-showers. Frost and rime,
Those hoary warriors, locked the land,
The homes of men.]⁹

Here we see the restrictions that the cold placed on a people who had meagre heating facilities and relied on good weather for mobility. At this point we are reminded of the lot of Hengest in Beowulf, who had to winter in Frisia because of the storms and the frozen sea. If the sea was restrictive at the best of times, the cold frozen sea was doubly so.

A good description of a cold, cheerless sea is to be found in The Wanderer where it is such a sea that the "Wanderer" gazes upon as he wakes and

. . . gesið him bīforan fealwe wegas
bāpian brim-fuglas brædan fepra
hreosan hrim *and* snaw hagle gemenged.
(46-48)

[. . . sees before him the fallow ways,
sea-birds bathing and spreading their wings,
falling hoar-frost and snow mingled with hail.]¹⁰

Earlier in the poem the sea is hrimcealde (l. 4); the heart of the "Wanderer" is referred to as being freorig (l. 33) and the sea is also one wapema gebind (l. 24). Throughout the poem the sea is extremely hostile in its cold and cheerlessness. Anne Treneer feels that ". . . A line like 'gesið him bīforan fealwe wegas' still speaks to us in its own right without need of an interpreter, and again and again the cold strikes home by the mere sound of the words."¹¹

The Seafarer is another poem in which the cold sea makes an impact. In the opening lines of the poem, we learn of an extremely arduous life

at sea and can hardly suppress a chill when the "Seafarer" tell us,

. . . calde geprungen
 wæron mine fet forste gebunden
 caldum clommum . . .

 hu ic earmcearig iscealdne sæ
 winter wunade wræccan lastum
 winemægum bidroren
 bihongen hrimgicelum hægl scurum fleag
 pær ic ne gehyrde butan hlimmān sæ
 iscaldne wæg . . .

(8-19)

[
 . . . My feet
 were nipped with cold, frost bound
 in chill fetters . . .

 how, wretched and anxious, I remained an exile
 during the winter on the ice-cold sea,
 separated from my friendly kinsmen,
 hung about with icicles amid flying showers of hail.
 There I heard nothing but the roar of the sea,
 of the ice-cold wave, . . .]12

The northern European seas are always cold, and this fact is faithfully recorded time and again in Anglo-Saxon writings. Even when the sea in question is situated in a warmer climate, it is referred to as cold. The icy seas that left Hengest stranded, the iscaldne wæg (l. 19) of The Seafarer and the hrimcaldne sæ (l. 4) of The Wanderer spill over into Exodus, where the warmer sea of a more southerly climate is still described as the sincalda sæ (l. 472). In The Phoenix the fair waters in that pleasant land are said to be brimcald (l. 67).

The sea's stormy moods were another side of its character that understandably caught the attention of the Anglo-Saxons. Because there was little in their open ships to safeguard them from a storm at sea, such storms would be all the more remembered. The dominant mood of the sea in the corpus of Anglo-Saxon literature, as it is in Beowulf, is one

of unrest and storm. The sea is hardly ever at rest. If it is not stormy, then its rolling waves are depicted and there is a definite suggestion of restlessness. In Elene we are presented with an interesting seascape when Elene sets out to find the cross. We catch the sense of bustle and excitement when we read:

. . . fearoðhengestas
ymb geofenes stæð gearwe stodon,
sælde sæmearas sunde getenge.
ða wæs orcnæwe idese siðfæt
siddan wæges helm werode gesohte;
.
Leton þa ofer fifelwæg famige scriðan
bronte brimpisan, bord oft onfeng
ofer earhgeblond yða swengas.
Sæ swinsade. . . .
.
ærmearhte gesion se ðone sið beheold
brecað ofer bæðweg, brimwudu snyrgan,
under swellingum samearh plægæan,
wadan wægflotan. . . .¹³

(226-246)

[Along the sea's margin stood harnessed ocean steeds, fettered sea-stallions floating on the sound. Then was the lady's journey easy to be known when she sought out the tossing floods with all her train. . . .

. . . .
Then they let their high-flanked coursers of the deep drive foaming over the sea-breast's home. Oft in the ocean tumult the ship's side felt the swinging blows of the billows; the sea roared. . . .

. . . .
Then might he have seen, whoso beheld that journey, sea-ships plunge through the billowy paths, and send under bellying sails, steeds of the ocean stride, and wave-ships skim. . . .]¹⁴

Though there is no storm in this particular instance, we are nevertheless presented with a boisterous and vivacious sea that makes the voyage something of an adventure in its own right. The whole scene is one of gaiety and liveliness that recalls the two voyages of Beowulf. The depiction of the ships as sea-horses, champing at the bit and eager to

go, and the references to the lively, roaring ocean create a very stirring scene. The sea, though not stormy, is lively in a more good-natured sense and so gives the scene a sense of exhilaration that cannot be missed. The very tone of this passage gives us an idea of the way the Anglo-Saxons felt about any sea-journey, whether it took place in fair or foul weather. To them the sea was always a challenge.

The best examples of storm scenes are to be found in the Riddles and in Andreas. Riddle 2 is a description of a storm at sea. It is a short poem in which the storm's element of surprise is well depicted:

Hwilum ic gewite swa ne wenap men
under ypa gepraec eorpan secan
garsecges grund. . . .
(1-3)

[At times, when men do not expect it,
I depart to go to the bottom of the sea,
to its floor, beneath the crash of waves. . . .]¹⁵

Riddle 3 is a description of storm both at sea and on land. In its seventy-five lines a terrifying scene is depicted. The very foundations of Anglo-Saxon security seem threatened when the personified storm says,

. . . ac ic eþelstol
hælepa hrera hornsalu wagiad
wera wicstede weallas beofiad
steape ofer stiwitum. . . .
(7-10)

[. . . but I shake the foundation
of the homes of men; the horn-decked halls,
men's dwelling-places, totter; the high-walls tremble
above the household. . . .]¹⁶

A few lines later a very realistic picture is given, this time, of a

storm at sea:

. . . famig winneð
 wæg wið wealle wonn arised
 dun ofer dype hyre deorc on last
 eare geblonden ofer fered
 þæt hy gemittað mearclonde neah
 hēā hlincas þær bið hlud wudu
 brimgiesta breahm . . .

 . . . þær bið ceole wen
 slibre sæcce gif hine sæ byred
 on þa grimman tid gaesta fulne
 þæt he scyle rice birofen weorpan
 feore bifohten faemig ridan
 yþa hycgum þær bið egsa sum
 ældum geywed . . .

(19-34)

[. . . The foaming billow
 fights against the cliff. A mountainous wave
 rises wan above the deep; dark behind it,
 driven up by the sea, another follows
 so that they strike against the high rocks
 near the boundary of the sea and land. There the
 ship is full of noise
 there is a cry from the sailors . . .

 . . . There the ship must expect
 a cruel struggle, if the sea carries it away,
 with its freight of souls, at that terrible hour,
 so that it shall be deprived of its sovereignty,
 lose its life in battle, and be tossed, foam-covered
 on the backs of the waves. A terror
 is revealed there to men . . .]¹⁷

It is indeed a cruel struggle. These lines are so filled with tension
 and strife that we almost feel ourselves among the sailors and hear their
 cry. The realism of the piece is striking. The small open boat from
 which one looks up at the waves is not too far from shore, and it has
 to battle to avoid being carried out into vast reaches of the seas. The
 terror is stark as the ship and the people on board fight for life.
 In this riddle we get a glimpse of the utter awe in which storms must

have been held by a people whose only protection was afforded by their horn-gabled halls and frail boats. To them the storms were a very real manifestation of that outer hostile world that constantly threatened the warm and friendly circles of light in their halls; when the storms were met out at sea, far from the relative safety of men's homes, their terror was doubled.

In Andreas, we have realistic description of a sea-voyage. The voyage element, in this poem, which is some six hundred lines long and accounts for a third of the poem, is only perfunctorily mentioned in the poem's Greek source. Within the description of the voyage the poet inserts a description of a storm at sea. In the prose homily St. Andrew, Christ, the steersman of the ship, merely says to Andrew, ". . . I geseo þæt þas broþor synd geswencede of ðisse sæwe hreonesse . . ." [. . . I see that these brethren are wearied of the roughness of the sea . . .].¹⁸ In the poem, however, the author, with a stroke of poetic genius, expands the roughness of the sea into a brief but extremely lucid account of a storm at sea:

. . . þā gedrōfed wearþ,
onhrōered hwæl- mere. Horn-fisc plegode,
glād geond gār-secg, and se grāge mæw
wæl-gifre wand. Weder-candel swearc,
windas wēoxon, wāgas grundon,
strēamas styredon, stren̄gas gurrōn,
wædu gewāette. Wæter-egesa stōd
prēata prȳðum. Þegnas wurdon
ācol-mōde. Ænig ne wōende
þæt hē lifiende land begēate,
þāra-þe mid Andrēas on ēagor-strēam
cēol gesōhte. . . .¹⁹

(369-380)

[Then the depths were troubled. The horn-fish darted
Gliding through ocean; the gray gull wheeled
Searching for carrion. The sun grew dark.

A gale arose and great waves broke;
 The sea-streams were stirred. Halyards were humming,
 Sails were drenched. Sea-terrors grew
 In the welter of the waves. The thanes were adread
 Who sailed with Andrew on the ocean stream
 Nor hoped with life ever to come to land.]²⁰

This picture, along with that depicted in Riddle 3, is the most realistic of any sea scene in Old English literature. The details of the hornfish, the gulls, the humming of the halyards, and the drenched sails are all recognisable traits of a storm that serve to bring the picture into sharp focus. This enlargement of the sea's roughness into a detailed picture of a storm is not without dramatic significance. The prose homily follows its Greek source, the Acts of Andrew and Matthew, more closely. In this source the apostles merely grow weary of a rough sea and Christ suggests setting them ashore. I feel, however, that the poet recognised that such disciples would appear as weak men to an audience to whom a relatively calm sea was a godsend. Therefore a storm of the first magnitude is introduced and sympathy is won for the disciples. Another consequence of the storm is that these same disciples can be more readily depicted as loyal thanes later on when they refuse to leave Andrew in spite of all their hardships.

The realism of Anglo-Saxon seascapes is often enhanced by references to noise. The sounds of the sea and its creatures were well known to the Anglo-Saxon writers, and as these noises resound through the descriptions of the sea, a certain verisimilitude is added. In Riddle 3 the ship is full of noise, and this includes the cry of man. The cry is a weak noise in comparison to the crashing waves and roaring ocean, thus reflecting the powerlessness of man when confronted with the hostility

of the ocean. In Exodus the plight of Pharoah's host is heightened as the flood that engulfs them is described as gyllende gryre (l. 489). Perhaps the best example of the effects of sea-sounds is to be found in The Seafarer, where the loneliness of the Seafarer is underscored by a catalogue of the sea-sounds that assail his ears:

~~þ~~aer ic ne gehyrde butan hlimman sǣ
 iscaldne wæg hwilum ylfete song
 dyde ic me to gomene ganetes hleopor
 and huilpan sweg fore hleahtor weras
 mæw singende fore medodrince
 stormas þær stanclifu beotan þær him stearn oncwæð isigfepera
 ful oft ~~þæt~~ earn bigeal urigfepra . . .
 (18-24)

[There I heard nothing but the roar of the sea,
 of the ice-cold wave, and sometimes the song of the wild swan;
 I had for my amusement the cry of the gannet
 and the sound of the whale instead of the laughter of men,
 the sea-mew singing instead of the drinking of mead.
 Storms beat on the rocky cliffs, where the tern, ice on its wings,
 gave answer;
 very often the dewy-winged eagle screamed.]²¹

The one attribute of the sea that is perhaps of the greatest significance is that of darkness. The contrast between light and darkness and the association of the sea with darkness in Beowulf also occur in the rest of Anglo-Saxon literature. Such an association was natural to a people who sailed the sea with little or no means of artificial light and who saw in the depths of the sea a region that was dark both by day and by night. This area of darkness, the sea's depths, was keenly felt because it was but a few feet away from the open decks of the small Anglo-Saxon ships. The important point about this association with darkness is the fact that it carries with it a meaning that goes beyond mere physical fact. The association of darkness with evil and light with

good that has been widespread through the world was very much part of the Anglo-Saxon culture. Christianity and paganism here found common ground. The Christian hell and the pagan realm of Niflheim are both dark and gloomy places. The very flames of hell are black in Christ where the devils fall in sweartne leg (l. 1532). Conversely, heaven is a place of brightness in Anglo-Saxon poetry. The force of this latter point, however, is weakened, if not lost, since the original sources from which many of the Anglo-Saxon poets drew their inspiration also depict a bright heaven.²²

In the Anglo-Saxon world view the earth was brighter than the sea. In The Panther we learn of

. . . fugla and deora foldhrerendra
wornas widsceope swa wæter bibugeð.
þisne beorhtan bosm brim grymetende
sealtyþa geswing.

(5-8)

[. . . the multitude of birds and beasts widely distributed
that move on the earth, until the water,
the raging ocean, the rolling salt waves,
surrounds its bright bosom.]²³

Once again, as in the song of creation in Beowulf and in The Wonders of Creation, there is a picture of a bright earth surrounded by a somewhat darker ocean. Usually the description of water, particularly the sea, is colourless or else it is black, brown or fallow, a colour which, according to Wyld, "apparently expresses various shades of yellow, from pale to ruddy, and may probably be best translated 'dun' or 'tawny' when applied to the sea."²⁴

In The Wonders of Creation we read about the sun sinking "in ~~þæt~~ wonne genip under wætra gebring" [into the wan darkness beneath the surge

of the waters] (l. 79), and in Genesis A this same adjective wann or wonn occurs to describe the sea. In paraphrasing the Biblical Genesis the poet writes:

. . . Folde wæs þa gyta
 græs ungrene; garsecg þeahte
 sweart synnihte, side and wide,
 wonne wægæs. a wæs wuldortorht
 heofonweardes gast ofer holm boren
 miclum spedum.²⁵

(116-121)

[. . . The earth was yet
 grass ungreen. The ocean covered
 in black eternal night wide and far
 the dark waves. Then was the Glory-Torch,
 the spirit of the Heaven-Ward over the waters borne
 with great speed.]²⁶

The connection between the sun and "the Spirit of God" is interesting. The sun in Beowulf and The Wonders of Creation shines for the benefit of land-dwellers, and in the Breca episode in Beowulf it apparently has a calming effect on the turbulent sea. In the storm scene in Andreas the weather 'grows dark'; then a gale arises and the storm breaks. Gloom and darkness are attributes of storm, and brightness of fair weather--Beowulf's successful voyages take place in sunlit surroundings. In Andreas the sunlight is specially referred to as halig (l. 243), a description that fits the sunlight that shines throughout Anglo-Saxon literature. To the Anglo-Saxons the sun was indeed 'God's candle' which was sent to clear away the gloom and darkness of both chaos and destruction.

The adjective wann has aroused the interest of critics. Bernard Huppé feels that it implies the absence of colour in the passage above, and that the "wan waves" signify chaos. Huppé feels that this chaos has

to be distinguished from the darkness of the black night which, by means of wordplay on synn, is connected with sin and evil.²⁷ Huppé has a point here, but I feel that the adjective wann is more definitely connected with the dark when it is used elsewhere in connection with the sea. I agree with H. C. Wyld, who says, ". . . This word is usually, and no doubt rightly, rendered 'dark, dusky' and so on, and I believe . . . this is the proper rendering."²⁸ Such a rendering of the word is unmistakable later on in Genesis A, when the Lord tells Noah,

. . . þu scealt frið habban
mid sunum þinum, ðonne sweart wæter,
wonne wælstreamas werodum swelgað,
sceaðum scyldfullum.²⁹

(1299-1302)

[. . . You shall have peace with your sons when the black water, the dark floods devour men, guilty sinners.]

This association of the sea with darkness and chaos naturally led to its more direct association with evil and those forces of chaos which the Anglo-Saxons felt to be lurking at the edge of their tuns or enclosures. Such an association is clearly manifest in Beowulf. The monsters in this poem are purposely ill-defined, shadowy creatures of evil whose home is the sea. Their dark shapes come from the world of chaos, and under the cover of night they perform acts of destruction in the very heart of the ordered, created world in Heorot. The whale in the Old English Physiologus and the iceberg in Riddle 33 are similar forces of destruction that have their homes in the sea. The sea was indeed a fifilwæg as it is described in Elene (l. 237).

The whale, in the poem of the same name, is a deceitful creature

that treacherously sinks both men and ships. In this poem the whale's plunging into the ocean's depths is a metaphor for the devil's carrying away souls to hell. To the Anglo-Saxons, who it seems were acquainted with Nearchus' account of such a treacherous sea-monster,³⁰ such a metaphor was very apt. Indeed, the association of the sea depths with hell was perhaps a little more than metaphorical, since both were areas of eternal darkness. In the description of the mere in Beowulf there is a hint of the fires of hell burning in its depths.

The iceberg, the subject of Riddle 33, is seen in terms of terror and fear. Like the monsters in Beowulf and the whale in the poem The Whale, the iceberg is another destructive denizen of the sea. It would appear that the Anglo-Saxons were well acquainted with an iceberg's hard, sharp and unrelenting edges. Its description is a curious mixture of realism and the supernatural:

Wiht cwom æfter wege wrætlicu lipan
 cymlic from ceole cleopode to londe
 hlinsade hlude [h]leahtor wæs gryrelic
 egesful on earde ecge wæron scearpe
 wæs hio hetegrim hilde to sæne
 biter beadoweorca bordweallas grof
 heard nipende heterune bond. . . .
 (1-7)

[A wondrous creature came travelling along the wave.
 Stately from its keel it called to the land,
 shouted loudly; its laughter caused terror
 and fear in its home. Its edges were sharp;
 it was grim with hate, slow to enter battle,
 but fierce in deeds of war. Hard and destructive,
 it dug into wooden walls; it wrought a baleful spell.]³¹

There is something maniacal and sinister in the laughter of the iceberg. One senses a hint of the satanic in its animation as it shouts loudly

and strikes terror and fear into all around it with its diabolical laughter. This laughter, plus the iceberg's apparent delight in taking human life as it "grim with hate" digs into the walls of ships, makes the iceberg one of the more malicious creatures of the sea. In the iceberg's bold and defiant approach to land and its unrelenting grip on the ship, one is witnessing what to the Anglo-Saxons must have been an unprovoked attack on the ordered world of man by a force from the outer chaotic world of Utgarth.

Despite many references to the sea and encounters with sea-creatures, there is a notable absence in Anglo-Saxon writings of description of life on board ship. The closest that we get to a description of a seaman's life is, appropriately, in The Seafarer, where we get a fleeting glimpse of the sailor's lot, or in the Gnomic Verses, where a few lines allude to the hard life of a rower. In The Seafarer, a poem the meaning of which has been the subject of much scholarly debate, we are presented with an overwhelming picture of loneliness and discomfort--of both body and soul.

. . . . þær mec oft bigēat
 nearo nihtwaco æt nacan stefnan
 þonne he be clifum crossoð calde gebrungen
 wæron mine fet forste gebunden
 caldum clommum þær þa ceare seofedun
 hat [e] ymb heortan hungor innan slat
 merewerges mod . . .

(6-12)

[. . . There the anxious night-watch
 often troubled me at the prow of the ship
 beating along the cliffs. My feet
 were nipped with cold, frost-bound
 in chill fetters, while cares sighed
 hot around my heart, and hunger tormented my soul
 till I was weary of the sea . . .]³²

In the Gnomic Verses life at sea is referred to as extremely strenuous. At first a scene full of camaraderie is painted in which two men sit at a board, enjoy themselves and momentarily 'forget harsh fate.' Then the poet states that a life of leisure is impossible on board ship unless one is under sail. The life of a rower is shown to be one full of frustration:

. . . werig sceal se wip winde roweþ ful oft mon wearnum tihð
 eargne þæt he elne forleose drugað his ar on borde.
 (187-188)

[He shall be weary who rows against the wind; very often he is
 freely accused
 of being slack, so that he grows disheartened, and his oar becomes
 dry on board.]³³

A large part of the romance of many a modern sea yarn lies in the atmosphere of camaraderie on board; there is a warmth in the collective efforts of man within the ship, no matter how chilling the scene may be outside. Not only is such camaraderie on board missing in Anglo-Saxon literature, but in The Seafarer we are given the distinct impression that it existed only on land in the bright hall.

The deceitful and terrifying creatures of the sea and the predominantly unpleasant nature of the sea itself both contribute to the painting of a consistent picture of a cruel and unpleasant sea. The consistency of this picture in the body of Anglo-Saxon literature is surprising. Indeed, as Anne Treneer states, "the body of Old English sea-poetry is strangely homogenous in character."³⁴ Rarely is the sea depicted as a pleasant body of water. The Anglo-Saxons recorded what they felt and saw, and the characteristics of the sea that impressed themselves the most in Anglo-Saxon minds were not surprisingly the more unpleasant ones. In Anglo-Saxon writings, we are reminded time and again of those

things which made the struggle at sea all the harder--the cold, the storm and the dark with its shadowy inhabitants--and of the fact that this hostile region encircled that area of the world, the hall, in which there was relative security.

Chapter III

THE SEA AS A MEASURE OF MAN

It was natural that the cold, storm-swept northern seas should hold the respect of the Anglo-Saxons. The sea provided a challenge for the more adventuresome souls in their society who, by pitting themselves against it, gained the esteem of their fellow men. The sea in Anglo-Saxon literature often becomes a yardstick by which a man's heroism may be measured. Close association with the sea affords the heroes of several Anglo-Saxon works an extra amount of dignity. Respect for the sea and recognition of its challenge is recorded throughout Anglo-Saxon literature, in which repeated references are found to both the hardships encountered at sea and to the bravery of those who faced these hardships.

This respect for the sea came about not only because of the stormy nature of the northern seas but because the Anglo-Saxons were particularly poorly equipped to come to grips with the hazards of such an ocean. Their cousins, the Vikings, were to perform daring navigational feats in improved ships during later centuries, but it cannot be said that the Anglo-Saxons themselves ever attained such seafaring heights. Indeed, it would appear that the Anglo-Saxons were not good seamen. According to the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, it was this inability at sea, as much as anything else, that caused the Anglo-Saxons to fall such easy prey to the marauding Vikings. By the late ninth century, after almost a hundred years of Viking depredations, some sort of Anglo-Saxon naval force came

into being, for the Chronicle records several successful naval engagements against the Scandinavians. It was the continued presence of these Scandinavians that led to the eventual establishment of a West-Saxon navy by Alfred in the year 896. In the annals for this year the Chronicle records:

þa het AElfred cyng timbran langscipu ongen ða aescas. þa wæron fulneah tu swa lange swa þa ðoru, sume hæfdon lx ara, sume mā; þa wæron ægðer ge swiftran ge unwealtran ge eac hieran þonne þa oðru. Næron nawðer ne on Fresisc gescaepene ne on Denisc, bute swa him selfum ðuhte pæt hie nytwyrðoste beon meahten.¹

[Then King Alfred had 'long ships' built to oppose the Danish warships. They were almost twice as long as the others. Some had 60 oars, some more. They were both swifter and steadier and also lighter than the others. They were built neither on the Frisian nor the Danish pattern, but as it seemed to him himself that they could be most useful.]²

The importance of this event is historical, because in the building of these ships historians have seen the foundations of the English Navy. King Alfred saw the advantages of a mobile sea force, and for the first time in English military history the sea was put to positive use. These first attempts, however, were not entirely successful; the annal for the same year, 896, also records that these new ships were not easy to handle, for they ran aground very awkwardly, causing problems of communication and harassment for the English and Frisians who manned them. The mention of Frisians seems to suggest that the English needed some help in the naval arts and got it from their Frisian cousins who were known to be expert seamen. Since these ships were given to running aground, and no fewer than twenty of them perished in that same summer of 896, the beginning of the English navy was not too auspicious. It was the

beginning of an English navy, however, that in succeeding centuries was to have a tradition that was second-to-none.

The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle also attests to the fact that the sea was quite often fatal. It is an unrelenting sea that ebbs and flows through this work. Besides the annal for 896, the Chronicle records that in 794 some Scandinavian ships were shattered to pieces by a storm, and under the year 877 it prosaically states that the enemy ". . . mette . . . micel yst on sæ and þær forwearp cxx scipa æt Swanawic."³ [. . . encountered a great storm at sea, and 120 ships were lost at Swanage⁴]. The figure of 120 in the above passage may be open to question since it was the "long hundred" and may just mean "many," but it is obvious that a disaster on a gigantic scale occurred.

Anglo-Saxon literature shows that the Anglo-Saxons had not yet reached the stage of daring voyages on the open seas. Though the sea is often mentioned in their writings, it tends to be that part of the sea that breaks upon the shore rather than the far sea reaches. Often in poems that present seascapes there is a coast that is not too far away. In The Seafarer a picture is presented of a lonely miserable life at sea. One gets the feeling that the Seafarer is indeed far away from companionship out on the open sea, but this is not so; his ship be clifum cnossað (l. 8) and he hears the cries of shore birds such as the gannet, the swan and the tern. In The Wife's Complaint the woman bewails the fact that her lover has sailed "over the tossing waves" (l. 7). To the modern mind this conjures up a vision of crossing oceans. When the woman pictures where her husband may be, however, she envisions a coastal scene similar to that of The Seafarer:

far from land and companionship, we get an overwhelming feeling of loneliness and exile in the poem. This loneliness of life at sea was something that was not liked by the Anglo-Saxons. They lived in a harsh world in which security lay in numbers and the comitatus was a necessary social institution. The most joyous descriptions of Anglo-Saxon social life inevitably centre on the hall of the lord in which men sit by the bright fire and pass around the mead. In the hall there was light, friendship and security. It was not an age that was particularly enamoured of the "lone wolf." In such a world the companionless man was regarded with suspicion and hostility. One of Ine's laws clearly states the fate of unwary strangers:

. . . Gif feorcund mon oððe fremde būtan wege geond wudu gonge,
 ond ne hrīeme ne horn blāwe, for ðeof hē bid tō prōfianne oððe
 to slēanne oððe to āliesanne.⁷

[If a strange or foreign man goes off the track into the woods
 and does not shout nor blow his horn, he is assumed to be a
 thief--to be slain or set free.]

The plight of the lordless man roaming alone through a hostile world is also the subject matter of The Wanderer. Life at sea for the Anglo-Saxons was essentially a lonely life, far removed from the bright hearth in the centre of their tun or enclosure. The strenuous life in their rowing boats left little time for camaraderie, and the small ship itself cut a lonely figure on the waves. In this respect I prefer over other translations Robert Kilburn Root's translation of the following lines of Andreas, in which he catches the Anglo-Saxon feeling for the small, solitary ship:

. . . Hwanan cōmon gē cēolum līðan,
mā-cræftige menn, on mere-byssan,
āne ēag flōtan?⁸

(256-258)

[Whence come ye, men in seamanship expert,
Seafaring on your ocean-coursing bark,
Your lonely ship?]⁹

Though the Anglo-Saxons were gregarious and banded together for reasons of security, by the same token theirs was a society in which individual worth, within the framework of the comitatus, counted for much. The sea often plays an important part in Anglo-Saxon literature because it becomes a yardstick by which such individual worth may be measured, whether in the fields of valour or fate. This role of the sea as a measure of man is a role which has been missed in Anglo-Saxon scholarship. In Beowulf a large part of the hero's greatness lies in his ability to face the perils of the sea, and the sea thereby has an important dramatic function in the work. Such a dramatic function also exists in Andreas, Genesis "A" and Exodus, where close association of the heroes with the sea invests them with a greater dignity. This dramatic function is particularly noticeable in the Old English poems Genesis "A" and Exodus, where direct comparisons can be made with Biblical accounts.

Voyages in Old English literature reflect the reality of Anglo-Saxon times in that they are never pleasure cruises. Those who undertook them were considered to be people of considerable personal daring. In Aelfric's Colloquy we are presented with such a daring figure in the person of the merchant, who states:

Ic astige min scyp mid hlæstum minum, 7 rope ofer sælice dælas,
7 cype mine þingc, 7 bicge þincg dyrwyrðe þa on þisum lande ne
beop acennede, 7 ic hit togelæde eow hider mid micclan plihte

ofer sæ, 7 hwylon forlidenesse ic þolie mid lyre ealra þingra
minra, uneaþe cwic ætberstende.¹⁰

[I go aboard my ship with my wares, and row over parts of the sea, selling my goods, and buying precious things which cannot be produced in this country. Then with great peril on the sea, I bring them here to you. Sometimes I suffer shipwreck, and lose all my things, scarce escaping with my life.]¹¹

Such a merchant who continually braved the sea could claim a right to thaneship after he had made three successful voyages with his own ship. This information comes from an eleventh century text, which states:

. . . 7 gif massere geþeah, þæt he ferde þrige ofer wid sæ þe
his agenum cræfte, se wæs þonne syððan þegenrihtes weorðe.¹²

[. . . and if a merchant prospered, that he went three times over the wide sea in his own ship, then he was worthy thereafter of the right ofthane.]

The linking of the right to thaneship with the number of voyages undertaken shows the high regard that Anglo-Saxon society had for the sea and for those who ventured out on it. This high regard is reflected in the pages of Anglo-Saxon literature, where the natural hazards of the sea, the depredations of its denizens and the uncomfortable life on board ship all combine to make a seafaring life a challenge. Those who take up this challenge are shown to be outstanding individuals. The usual picture of a sailor in Anglo-Saxon poetry is that of a bold person who aggressively drives his ship across the waves. In Christ one comes across a catalogue of the various endowments bestowed on various individuals by God, and one of these endowments is that which is given to the sailor who

. . . mæg fromlice
ofer sealtne sæ sund-wudu drifan

hreran holm-præce.

(676-678)

[. . . can boldly
o'er the salt sea drive the ocean-wood
and stir the water's rush.]¹³

The verb drifan in the above lines may catch our eyes. H. C. Wyld notes that the use of this verb and the verb brecan in connection with ships at sea further emphasizes the fact that sea-journeying was never considered an easy task. The verbs conjure up visions of struggle and support the idea of bold sailors forcing a passage.¹⁴

In Beowulf, Beowulf's men, who we are told were the best men available, are just such bold sailors. In the poem they are given a respect which they have earned by undertaking the initial voyage to Heorot, where they are treated as sea-heroes. Throughout the poem they are accorded a dignity that is separate from the exploits of their leader, though the latter's efforts certainly enhance the position of his followers.

Beowulf's own ability at sea is of course quite astonishing, for the waters hold no terror for him. A whole previous chapter has been taken up with this subject, but perhaps one may make the point here that Beowulf's unique ability to deal with the sea starts with his outward voyage. There is a distinct hint in the poem that this voyage was one which left the coast, since we read that on the second day

. . . wunden-stefna gewaden hæfde,
bæc ða liðende land gesāwon,
brim-clifu bliþan, beorgas stēape,
side sǣ-naessas.

(220-223)

[. . . the curved prow had journeyed on so far that the voyagers saw the land, the sea-cliffs, glisten--the steep mountains, the bold promontories.]

The point would not be missed by an Anglo-Saxon audience. Whereas most voyages followed the coastline, here was a man who boldly left the safety of the coast and the above lines which describe his landfall in Denmark must have had an impact that has now quite disappeared.

Though Beowulf is undoubtedly the most outstanding sea-hero in Old English literature, other such heroes exist in Genesis A, Exodus and Andreas, where close association with the sea elevates the dignity of the main characters.

The poem Genesis A is a free paraphrase of the Biblical account in which the author adds many a touch of local colour, such as the curious ark which get stronger the more it is battered about and the figure of the evil black-feathered raven. A touch of Anglo-Saxonization that is important is the elevation of Noah and his family to the stature of sea-heroes. In the Biblical version of the story, Noah is an extremely passive person upon whom God works his will. In the Old English poem some of this passivity is allayed by a hint of restlessness on the part of the inhabitants of the ark and by the recognition of them as heroes.

Holm wæs heononweard; hæleð langode,
wægliðende, swilce wif heora,
hwonne hie of nearwe ofer nægledbord
ofer streamstæde stæppan mosten
and of enge ut æhta lædan.¹⁵
(1431-1435)

[The flood was sinking; the sea-farers, the heroes and their wives, longed (for the time) when they might venture to step out of their straitened quarters over the well-nailed side out on the bank, and take their goods out of their crowded home.]¹⁶

There is a different feeling in this passage for those in the ark than that which is expressed in the Bible. The Biblical Noah and his family are a very docile group. Such docility would not have been received too well among a people who were well known for their independent spirit. Therefore this docility is alleviated as much as possible in the Old English poem. This is largely brought about by an even closer association with the sea on the part of Noah. In the above passage the inhabitants of the ark are called "sea-farers" and "heroes," and elsewhere Noah is referred to as "the leader of the voyagers"; such epithets do not occur in the Biblical account. Since seafarers were people who commanded respect among the Anglo-Saxons, these direct references to Noah and his family as seafarers also accorded them this respect, and in so doing, erased any contrary feelings that the Biblical docility may have awakened. Another effect of the use of these epithets was to bring the story of Noah closer to home. The Anglo-Saxons were a people who could the more easily identify with a figure that was pictured as a seafarer, and they must have rejoiced with Noah when he

. . . stah ofer streamweall, swa him seo stefn bebed,
 lustum miclum, and alaeddde þa
 of wægþele wraðra lafe.¹⁷
 (1494-1496)

[. . . stood forth upon the strand, as the Voice bade
 him, and with great joy led out of the ship the
 survivors of these perils.]¹⁸

Noah the seafarer, the captain of a unique ship, could be a hero in Anglo-Saxon eyes. Even though there was the presence of the all-powerful Christian God in the background, the ordeal that Noah underwent in the ark was one that would arrest Anglo-Saxon attention,

and in their imagination Noah, because of his courage, would be magnified into a sea-hero. In the Old English poem there is a particular sympathy for Noah and his family that is absent in the Biblical version: it is a sympathy brought about by a poet writing about a sea-hero for a people who knew the hardships of life at sea and could well imagine the rigour of life in a crowded ship.

In the Old English poem Exodus there is even more divergence from the Biblical account. The poem deals with the crossing of the Red Sea by the Children of Israel and this Hebraic event is set forth in exceedingly Anglo-Saxon terms. There is a heavy smell of battle and the twelve tribes are pictured as an outnumbered but yet courageous group of men. These men are a far cry from their Biblical counterparts, who in comparison appear as cowards when they tell Moses,

Is not this the word that we spoke to thee in Egypt, saying:
Depart from us that we may serve the Egyptians? For it was
much better to serve them, than to die in the wilderness.¹⁹

Instead of being portrayed as people who upbraid Moses, the Children of Israel in the Old English poem are painted as thanes and, more significantly, as seamen. As early as line 81 of the poem the poet introduces an extended metaphor in which the Biblical pillar of cloud is a sail, the journey of the Israelites is a voyage and the Israelites themselves are sailors. This metaphor has puzzled the critics. Irving finds a possible source for it in Jerome's Liber de Nominibus Hebraicis, where he feels that there is a hint of "traditional allegorization resembling that of this poem."²⁰ The importance of the metaphor is that it goes beyond allegory and performs a dramatic function outside

that framework. The use of this metaphor makes the whole story of the flight of the Children of Israel far more palatable to the Anglo-Saxons. In Exodus, as in Genesis A, the association of Biblical personages with the sea invests them with a heroic dignity, and in the process the understanding and sympathy of an Anglo-Saxon audience would be the more readily gained. In both poems the closer relationship that exists between the sea and Noah or the Children of Israel brings these Biblical characters into clearer focus for the Anglo-Saxons, who could see these people acting against a familiar background of roaring waves and wan waters. The sea was a common enemy, and in the poems there is a closeness that the Anglo-Saxons must have felt, a closeness that was missing in the Biblical accounts of more passive, alien land-people, where the sea was mentioned in passing.

In Exodus the identification of the Children of Israel as sea people is very direct. They are called "shipmen" consistently, which on one occasion leads to the rather incongruous picture of shipmen lying in their "tents" by the sea. That the term "shipmen" implied respect is also suggested by the fact that the Egyptians are referred to as "landmen," a term that seems to connote scorn. Ironically, when the Egyptians are in the midst of being destroyed by the sea, they, too, are called "shipmen." The use of the term "shipmen" for the Israelites is fitting, for the Children of Israel in the poem do seem to be full of fight rather than cowed. It is this display of courage in face of enemies by land on the one hand and the hostile sea on the other that made the Israelite situation all the more poignant to the Anglo-Saxons. An Old English audience would well understand their plight when the poet writes:

. . . Hæfde nýdfara nihtlange fyrst,
 beah ðe him on healfa gehwām nettend seomedon
 mægen oððe merestreām; nāhton mǣran hwyrft.²¹
 (208-210)

[The fugitives had the space of a night, though foes
 lurked about them on all sides, the army or the sea.
 They had no other way out.]²²

The naming of the sea as a foe has an Anglo-Saxon ring about it. The poet's audience can readily sympathize with the Children of Israel who, beset by enemies on land, look out onto a sea that is equally hostile. They were, to quote a saying that is aptly and significantly current in English, "between the devil and the deep sea."

The consistent use of the sea metaphor in Exodus enhances the reputation of the Children of Israel and removes much of the distance in time and culture between the two societies. In the poem the Children of Israel are Germanic sea-warriors and consequently the work has an immediacy about it for the Anglo-Saxons, an immediacy which the Biblical account lacks. In both Genesis A and Exodus the sea helps to bring the exploits of Biblical characters into sharper and more immediate focus. This is so because the sea to the Anglo-Saxons was a consistently hostile body of water and anyone that had to face its perils would be viewed with an understanding sympathy.

Andreas is another specifically Christian poem in which the sea plays an important role. In this poem the sea helps to portray Andrew as a man of faith and courage and Christ is a very powerful individual. To the Anglo-Saxons, with their knowledge of the rough northern seas, Andrew's first test of faith is the actual undertaking of an ocean voyage. In this text Andrew's faith is underscored by the fact that in obeying

the injunctions of Christ he makes the voyage without provisions. Christ's speech while in the disguise of a seaman is one which the Anglo-Saxons would well understand.

Hw gewearp þe þæs, wine lēofosta,
 þæt þū sǣ-beorgas sōcan woldest,
 mere-strēama gemet, mǣmum bedæled,
 ofer ðeald clifu ðeoles niosan?
 Næfst þe to frōfre on farop-straete
 hlāfes wiste nē hlūtorne
 drynċ to dugode. Is se drohtap strang
 þæm-þe lagu-lāde lange cunnap.²³
 (307-314)

[How does it happen, dearest friend,
 That lacking money you would make a voyage
 O'er the climbing billows, past the cold cliffs,
 To the far sea-limits? Have you no food
 To bring you comfort, or clear water
 For your refreshment, on the ocean flood?
 Hard is the life for one who long
 Tires ocean-voyaging.]²⁴

These lines have a double importance. First of all, they emphasize Andrew's courage. He is not only willing to face the hazards of the hostile sea for his faith but is willing to do so without even the meagre defences that are available to him. Such a willingness must have made an impression on a people who lived in a world where security lay largely within the tun or enclosure and the traveller's best protection was self-sufficiency. This fact, plus the fact that the journey was by sea, makes Andrew have courage of heroic proportions. This voyage to Mermedonia, with its attendant challenges, proves Andrew's mettle and provides a fitting build-up to his wondrous deeds in that city. The fact that Andrew is seen in heroic terms is illustrated at the end of the poem, where he is given a hero's farewell which is reminiscent of those accorded sea-heroes:

. . . lāēdan . . . lēoda weorode
 lēofne lārēow to lides stefnan,
 maecgas mōd-geōmre. ƿær manigum wæs
 hāt æt heortan hyge weallende.
 Hīe ƿā gebrōhton æt brimes næsse
 on wāeg-ƿele wigan unslāwne.
 Stōdon him ƿā on ōfre æfter rēotan
 ƿenden hīe on yðum æðelinga wynn
 ofer seolh-ƿaðu gesēon meahton.²⁵
 (1706-1714)

[. . . sad hearted men in a mighty multitude
 Brought their loved leader to the bow of his ship.
 For many a man his spirit was moved,
 Welling within him. The warrior brave
 They brought to his sea-boat under the hill.
 Behind him, weeping, they stood on the shingle
 While they still had sight o'er the tossing sea,
 O'er the path of the seal, of that best of princes.]²⁶

Once again the sea is used to help build up a character to heroic proportions. The Andrew in this final picture is a far cry from the man who timorously questions his ability at the beginning of the poem. Andrew has come a long way in matters of daring and courage, and the sea has played no small part in the development of his character. He challenges the ocean, relying on nothing else but his faith. When at sea he faces a fierce storm with outstanding composure, and in the city of Mermedonia his faith enables him to work a miracle in which he has command over the sea. He makes water gush forth from a pillar, an act which may surely be seen symbolically as Andrew's mastery of the sea. Like Noah in Genesis A and the Children of Israel in Exodus, Andrew's close association with the sea in the poem, an association that is largely missing in the prose account of the story, makes him a character with whom the Anglo-Saxons could the more easily identify. It is an association that once again helps the hero of the story to gain the respect and sympathy of the audience.

The other important aspect of Christ's speech, in which he talks knowledgeably about life at sea, is the fact that it is Christ who is speaking. If Andreas is a poem that was written for newly-converted Anglo-Saxons, then it is a master-stroke to emphasize Christ's role as seaman. By making Christ a sea-hero, the poet has brought him close to the audience and shown them the greatness of the Christian God. In talking about the voyage, Stanley says that the

. . . listeners may have had special pleasure in the description of the sea-voyage in which the Divine Pilot appears almost like the pagan Woden of whom many legends were current that he ferried men across and saved them in the disguise of a ferryman.²⁷

Such a linking of Christ with Woden, even if only on the subconscious level, would make the new religion easier to adhere to. The new God's prowess at sea was a point worth making, and this is explicitly done, particularly when Christ's extraordinary powers as a helmsman are disclosed:

Næfre iċ sǣ-lidan soelran mǣtte,
mā-craeftigran, þæs-þe mē þynċeþ,
rōwend rōfran, rǣd-snotorran,
wordes wīsrān. Iċ wille þē,
eorl unfracūþ, ānre nū gīena
bōene biddan: . . .
.
. . . wolde iċ frīondsciepe,
þēoden þrymm-fæst, þinne gief iċ meahte,
begietan gōdne.²⁸

(471-480)

[Never have I met more skillful mariner
Or more sea-crafty than you seem to me;
No stouter sailor, none sager in counsel
Or wiser in word. A boon I would beg
Illustrious earl . . .
Gladly would I gain, O glorious Prince,
Your welcome friendship if I may win it, . . .]²⁹

The combination of Christ's wisdom and expertise at sea makes him a person of outstanding qualities.

The consistent portrayal of a cruel, hazardous sea in Anglo-Saxon writings is verified in the annals of the Anglo-Saxon Chronicle, where time and again the chronicler describes a cruel sea. Such a sea naturally provided a challenge, and those who took up this challenge gained the esteem of the Anglo-Saxons. This esteem is reflected in Anglo-Saxon literature in works such as Beowulf, Andreas, Genesis A, Exodus and Elene, where the sea performs the dramatic function of heightening the heroic qualities of the main characters.

Chapter IV

THE SEA AND CHRISTIANITY

It is impossible to arrive at any definite conclusions in a discussion of the influence of Christianity on Old English literature. The vague chronology of the various works and the fact that only a portion of this literature is extant allows one to reach what must, at best, be tentative conclusions. Even so, when discussing the influence of Christianity on the Anglo-Saxon attitude to the sea, one should arrive at conclusions that are far different from those of Arthur R. Skemp. In an article entitled "Transformation of Scripture in Anglo-Saxon Poetry", Skemp writes that

. . . The wild and terrible aspects of the sea, and of nature generally, forced themselves on the Anglo-Saxon imagination; awakening, however, not the earlier joy of strenuous conflict nor the modern romantic wonder, but the terror of painful experience.¹

Skemp is only partly right. He is correct when he states that the sea did not awaken a feeling of romantic wonder for such a feeling has only been made possible by a removal, to a large degree, of the dangers of the sea. Safer ships and many other technological advances which the Anglo-Saxons did not possess have reduced the more awesome aspects of the sea. I cannot agree, however, with Skemp's other assertion, one which he repeatedly states, that with the christianization of Old English poetry

. . . The sea gradually comes to be regarded with dread rather than with the daring and affectionate familiarity of the rowers --a change noticeable on contrasting the Seafarer or the Wanderer, or the sea-passages in Guthlac and Andreas with those in Beowulf.²

One has only to look at the embarkation scene in Elene to see the reason for my disagreement. Here is an Old English Christian poem in which the sea is not "regarded with dread"; rather, it fills people with "a joy of strenuous conflict." In Beowulf "daring and affectionate familiarity" with the sea is shown only by Beowulf. Such "familiarity," however, is not extended to other persons in the poem. Beowulf's ability to deal with the sea has been dealt with in Chapter II, where it was seen that this ability is one of his outstanding characteristics and contributes much to his being a hero. Beowulf is no everyday rover and his familiarity with the sea is not commonplace.

Though the sea may be seen at its worst in some specifically Christian poems, I feel, contrary to Skemp, that actual dread of the sea is, if anything, less in these poems. In three of the longest and best known of Old English Christian poems, the sea is distinctly an agent of destruction. In Genesis A, Exodus and Andreas the waves work their will, but one must not overlook the fact that the sea is now under divine control. In Genesis A the almost animated sea that crashes down upon the people is a sea that is obedient to God:

. . . Mere swiðe grap
on fæge folc feowertig daga,
nihta oðer swilc. Nið wæs rede,
wællgrim werum; wuldorcyniges
yða wræcon arleasra feorh
of flæschoman.³

(1381-1386)

[. . . The sea cruelly gripped the wretched folk for forty days, and nights as many: bitter was the suffering then, cruelly fateful to men. The waves of the King of Glory drove the souls of the vicious ones forth from their bodies.]⁴

A similar situation occurs in Exodus, where the sea is "a hostile warrior smiting down its foes" (l. 476) under the direction of its master, the "Lord of the ocean-floods" (l. 504). In this poem the sea is once again completely destructive, and as Anne Treneer so aptly states,

. . . The savagery of the description is astonishing, and, in spite of marshalled progress and due sequence--image being heaped on image and repetition on repetition--an effect is achieved by sheer weight. The sea becomes a hostile warrior. . . .⁵

In Andreas we meet with further instances of a savage sea when a storm arises while Andrew and his followers are at sea and when later the city of Mermedonia comes under the double attack of fire and water. In both these instances, however, the savage sea is under, or else comes under, divine control.

In all three of these poems, therefore, the sea is a very fierce agent of destruction. Here more than anywhere else in Old English poetry we see the utter destruction that the sea can cause. The Anglo-Saxon poets, who knew the rough nothern seas, fully utilized their acquaintance with this element, and the resultant descriptions of havoc are what caused Skemp to comment on the "dread" of the sea in this poetry. There is less dread of the sea in these poems, however, than in Beowulf or the storm riddles, for instance. The sea in the specifically Christian poems is clearly under God's control and as such is an ally. Though it may be fierce, the sea's waves are seen as thanes of God, and the sea itself is no longer quite such an uncontrollable alien element.

It is still the cruel sea, but it can be calmed or else its fury channeled in the direction of the enemy. The very knowledge that God could control the waters robbed the sea of a lot of its former terror for the Anglo-Saxons. They could appreciate the utter helplessness of Pharoah's army in Exodus and could understand the dread that the sea awoke in the alien enemies of God in the days of Noah and in Mermedonia. On the other hand, the Anglo-Saxons themselves were now firmly ranged on the side of God and they could reasonably expect a salvation from the sea similar to that recounted in Andreas.

The sea was not only a measure of man but was also a measure of the power of the Christian God. It is significant that those parts of the Bible which deal with control over water should be expanded into long poems. Control of the sea must have been one of the greatest manifestations of power to a people who were used to braving its dangers. The dreadful seas of Genesis A, Exodus and Andreas served to emphasize the power of a God who could control the fury of the hitherto uncontrollable ocean. To a people well acquainted with the sea's treachery, it was indeed a powerful God who could both calm the waves and stir them into fury.

That there should be such complete control of the sea was perhaps not too surprising to those Anglo-Saxons who were conversant with the scriptures or poems which paraphrased them. These works explicitly state that it was God who in the beginning parted the seas of chaos and created this world. In Genesis A the act of creation is set out in detail:

. . . Folde wæs þa gyt
 græs ungrene; garsecg þeah
 sweart synnihte, side and wide,
 wonne wæg as . . .

 . . . Holmas dæalde
 waldend ure and geworhte þa
 roderas fæsten; . . .

 . . . Flod wæs adæled
 under heahrodore halgum mihtum,
 wæter of wætrum, þam þe wuniað gyt
 under fæstenne folca hrofes.

 . . . ac stod bewrigen fæste
 folde mid flode. Frea engla heht
 þurh his word wes an wæter gemaene,
 þa nu under roderum heora ryne healdað,
 stowe gestefnde. Ða stod hraðe
 holm under heofonum, swa se halga bebead,
 sid æt somne, Ða gesundrod wæs
 lagoon wið lande. . . .

 . . . Gesette yðum heora
 onrihtne ryne, rumum flode,
 and gefetero. . . .⁶

(116-168)

[. . . The earth was yet unadorned by vegetation: the ocean covered
 it far and wide, turbid waves in the eternal night. . . . our Master
 parted the waves and wrought there the foundations of the firmament
 The flood was divided under the high heavens by holy power,
 the waters from the waters, and they still remain so under the
 firmament which roofs all nations. . . . but the earth stood girt
 fast by water. Through his word, the Ruler of the angels bade the
 waters be gathered together, which now hold their course beneath the
 skies in an appointed place. Then speedily the broad ocean stood
 all together under heaven as the Holy One commanded, for the flood
 was sundered from the dry land. . . . He established a proper
 channel for the waves, the broad flood, and fettered. . . .]⁷

Because of a lacuna in the manuscript, the description of the
 channeling of the waters comes to an abrupt close, but enough is extant
 to show that these lines are a detailed paraphrase of the Biblical Genesis
 with slightly more emphasis on the sea. The Anglo-Saxon world view
 remains essentially the same, since the earth is still 'girt fast by
 water,' but this water itself is no longer quite the primeval chaos that

it was in former times. The act of creation takes place in the very midst of the waters, and consequently the size of the ocean is diminished; then the waters are acted upon so that they 'gather together' and flow in 'proper channels.' By these acts the sea, though it is not adorned like the land nor wins the approbation of God, is brought out of utter chaos into the realm of creation. It is now controlled and given certain geographical limits.

God's complete dominance of the sea is particularly well illustrated in Andreas, where time and again the ocean waves fall under some sort of divine control. When Andrew is asked to go to Mermedonia, he hesitates on account of the distance and time involved but is reassured that this is no difficulty:

N'is þæt unieðe Eall-wealdan Gode
 to gefremmenne on fold-wege,
 þæt sīo cēaster hider on þās cnēo-risne
 under swegeles gang asetod weorðe,
 bregu-stōl bræme, mid þæm burg-warum,
 gief hit worde becwiþ wuldres Agend.⁸
 (205-210)

[. . . Slight (is) the task
 For God Almighty to command on earth,
 Under the sun, that this city be moved
 Unto this country, the stately seat
 And all who live there, if the Lord of Glory
 (Decree) it by His word.]⁹

To the Anglo-Saxons the expanse of the ocean was a very real obstacle which they encountered daily. Therefore these lines, which reduce this aspect of the ocean to insignificance, undoubtedly had an added force which has been lost in this age of the supersonic jet. These lines also look forward to the rest of the poem, in which the sea plays a subservient role and the power of God is all-encompassing.

The most direct instance of God's control over the sea comes when Andrew and his followers are at sea on their way to Mermedonia and a storm arises. Andrew's followers are afraid and he reassures them by telling of a previous occasion when a storm arose at sea and God calmed the waves. After a description of a fierce storm, in which the waves 'cry out' to each other and the cries of the ship's company recall the scene in Riddle 3, Andrew states:

. . . Cyning sōna arās,
 enġla Ēad-giefra yðum stillde,
 wæteres wielmum. Windas brēade,
 sǣ-sessode, smyltu wurdon
 mere-strēama gemetu. ⁊ ā ūre mōd ahlōg
 sibban wē gesāwon under swegeles gang
 windas and wægas and wæter-brōgan
 forhte gewordne for Frēan egesan.¹⁰
 (450-457)

[Then the King arose, the Ruler of angels,
 And stilled the waters, the surging waves,
 Subdued the winds. The seas subsided;
 Calm were the stretches of the ocean-stream.
 Our hearts rejoiced when we saw under heaven
 The water-terror, the wind and waves,
 Cower in fright for the fear of the Lord.]¹¹

This description leaves nothing to the imagination as far as God's power and dominion over the sea are concerned; the "water-terror" now 'cowers in fright.' It is here, however, in this part of Andreas, more than anywhere else in Old English poetry, that one may be tempted to uphold Skemp's claim that the sea came "to be regarded with dread," because Andrew says,

Nū sint gebrēade þegnas mīne,
 geonge gūþ-rincas. Gār-secg hlimmep,
 geofon geōtende. Grund is onhrōred,
 dēope gedrōfed, dugup is geswenčed,
 mōdigra mægen mičelum gebisigod.¹²
 (391-395)

[My youthful warriors, willing thanes,
Are sorely troubled. The sea resounds,
The surging ocean; the depths are stirred,
Terribly shaken. My troop are aghast,
My force of brave followers deeply dismayed.]¹³

While it is true that Andrew's followers exhibit a fear and dread of the ocean, it is a dread that is immeasurably weakened by the fact that the poet's audience cannot participate in it. This audience already knows that it is Christ who is the pilot of the boat. Andrew's followers are not aware of this fact, and the lines above are but a description of dread while in a state of ignorance that is not shared by the audience. The Christian audience of Andreas must have shared rather in Andrew's sense of security, when Christ tells him,

for-þon þē sōna sǣ-holm oncnēow,
gār-secg begang, þæt þū giefes hæfdest
Hāliges Gastes. Hræn eft onwand,
ēar-ȳða gebland. Egesa gestillde,
wid-fære wæg. Wadu swederodon
sippa hīe ongēaton þæt þē God hæfde
wære bewunden, Se-þe wuldres blæd
gestadolode strangum meahtum.¹⁴
(529-536)

[. . . for the sea perceived, the circle of ocean,
That you had the gift of the Holy Ghost.
The billows abated; the tumult of breakers;
The terror was stilled and the wide-stretching waves.
The seas subsided when the waters saw
That He Whose might shaped heavenly glory
In His safe-keeping held you close.]¹⁵

Besides the quelling of storms, dominance over the sea is further emphasized in Andreas when Andrew causes water to gush forth from a pillar and to flood the city of Mermedonia. In this incident one is reminded of both the flood narrative in Genesis and the crossing of the Children of Israel in the Old English Exodus. The rushing waters sweep

away the wicked and then open up a road before Andrew as he leaves prison.

In this last scene of destruction in Mermedonia, not only water but also fire comes under heavenly control. Fire in Anglo-Saxon poetry is also an element of considerable importance. As water was associated with cold and darkness, so fire was naturally associated with warmth and light; consequently, it was generally seen in more beneficial terms than were the wide expanses of water. The sun is referred to as "the candle of the Lord" (l. 1572) or "God's bright beacon" (l. 570) in Beowulf, and the blazing hearth of the Anglo-Saxon hall was undoubtedly looked upon with affection. On the other hand, the Anglo-Saxons were fully aware of the savagery and destructive power of flames. It is a curious fact that though Beowulf deals successfully with the sea and creatures associated with it, he is unable to defend himself and others against the depredations of fire or the fire-drake. Heorot is saved from the monsters of the deep only to fall victim to 'hostile flame' (l. 83). Beowulf's own hall is burnt up, his land is ravaged by flame, and when he fights the fire-drake he himself succumbs. In this connection with evil one must also mention the fire at the bottom of the mere in Beowulf which certainly has evil associations. Therefore, though fire, through its association with the sun and warmth, was often ranged on the side of the good, the Anglo-Saxons also knew of its more evil side, and it was an element that was to be respected just as much as water. In the devastation that takes place in the city of Mermedonia, both these elements become tools in the hands of God to create a scene of terror and sheer havoc that is unsurpassed in Anglo-Saxon literature.

Wāeg̃as wēoxon, wadu hlynsodon,
 flugon fȳr-gnāstas, flōd yðum wēoll.
 þāer wæs ēap-fynde innan burgum
 geōmor-giedd wrecen. Giehpe mændon
 forht-ferhþ manig, fūs-lēoþ gōlon.
 Egesliċ æled ēag-sīene wearþ
 heardliċ here-tēam, hlēoðor gryreliċ.
 þurh lyft-gelāc līeges blæstas
 weallas ymbwurpon, wæter miċelondon.¹⁶
 (1545-1553)

[Waves waxed great, the sea resounded;
 Fire-sparks flew; the flood flowed on.
 A lamentation was lifted up
 Throughout the city. Smitten with fear
 Men wailed their woe, chanted their death-song.
 The fearful flames were seen afar,
 Grim devastation, terrible din!
 Ascending in air the fiery surges
 Enveloped the walls. The waters rose.]¹⁷

The might of the Christian God is plainly manifest to both the inhabitants of Mermedonia and the Anglo-Saxon audience. The two hitherto most uncontrollable elements of fire and water come together to obey the most awesome will ever encountered.

The fact that the sea is controlled not only directly by God but also by others such as Andrew and Moses once again emphasizes the completeness of this control. In the city of Mermedonia it is Andrew who causes the flood to occur, and in the Old English Exodus it is Moses who stretches forth his arm to part the waters.

Another aspect of the sea in Old English Christian writings is one in which the sea is seen symbolically as the world. In Genesis A there is a strange description of Noah's ark:

. . . þæt is syndrig cynn;
 symle bið þy heardra þe hit hreoh wæter,
 swearte sæstreamas swiðor beatað.¹⁸
 (1324-1326)

[. . . it is unique in its kind: the harder
the fierce waters of the dark billows beat
it, the stouter does it ever become.]

Critics maintain that the sea here is allegorically the sinful world and the ark is the church of Christ. The more the sinful world battles against the church of Christ, the sturdier this church becomes. This role of the sea is more explicitly stated in an unpublished hymn in praise of St. Michael in MS. C.C.C.C.41 where the holy archangel St. Michael is

. . . se æðela noþend 7 se 3leapa frumlida 7 se þancwirdesta
sti3end, se ðe his scip 3efelleð 7 mid heofonlicum wæelum
hit 3efylled, þæt is ðonne, mid þam hal3um saulum; 7
mid ðy wry3else ðære 3odcundan 3efillnesse ofer þæs sæs
yðe he hit 3elæded, þæt is ðanne, ofer ðisses middan--
3eardes frecennesse, 7 þa hale3an saula 3elæded to þære
yðe ðæs heofoncundan lifes.

[. . . the glorious
shipmaster, the skilful pilot and the most renowned sailor,
who fills his ship and fills it with heavenly dead, that is,
with holy souls; and under the veil of divine fulfilment he
guides it over the waves of the ocean, that is, through the
dangers of this earthly world, and leads the holy souls to
the sea of the heavenly life.]¹⁹

Perhaps the best known example of the sea as the world comes at the end of Cynewulf's Ascension, where this theme becomes an extended simile in which life in this world is likened to a ship: it is buffeted by storms and tossed by waves while it struggles to reach a harbour where it can safely ride at anchor.

Nū is þon gelīcost, swā wē on lagu flode
ofer cāld wæter cēolum liðan,
geond sīdne sǣe sundhengestum,
flōd_wudu[m], fergen. Is þæt frēcne strēam,
yðā ofer mǣta, þe wē hēr on lācað
geond þās wācan woruld, windge holmas
ofer dēop gelād. Wæs se drohta strong

æron wē tō londe geliden hæfdon
 ofer hrēone hrycg. . . .20
 (850-858)

[Now it is most like as if on ocean
 Across cold water we sail in our keels,
 Over the wide sea in our ocean steeds
 Faring on in our flood-wood. Fearful the stream,
 The tumult of waters, whereon we toss
 In this feeble world. Fierce are the surges
 On the ocean lanes. Hard was our life
 Before we made harbour o'er the foaming seas.]²¹

Both Aelfric and Bede also use the symbol of the sea specifically for the worldly life or else human life on earth. This fact has led G. V. Smithers to the conclusion that the poems The Seafarer and The Wanderer may be seen in this light. Smithers states: ". . . the subject matter of each piece might equally well be described as 'the life of man on earth as an alien on exile, and the coming end of the world.'"²²

Though it is dangerous to arrive at firm conclusions, one discovers that the sea in the more obviously Christian poems is fully under God's control. It is still the cruel sea that is found in other works which may harken back to a pre-Christian past, such as Beowulf, but the sea's cruelty now is controlled and directed at specific alien peoples. Though the Anglo-Saxons might have sympathized with the hardships of others, they must have felt a hitherto unknown security in the knowledge that stormy seas could be calmed by the presence of the Holy Ghost. In consequence, there is less immediate dread of the sea, and in much Christian poetry the image of the majestic ocean is somewhat weakened.

CONCLUSION

The sea to the Anglo-Saxons was part of the great unknown. They faced the expanses of ocean in craft which, by today's standards, seem unbelievably fragile and small. Consequently, progress over the ocean waves was often a long and hazardous task, with shipwrecks being quite a common occurrence, and storms were acutely felt since the elements were viewed from unprotected positions.

It is natural, therefore, that the sea should be seen in rather harsh terms in the literature of such a people. The predominant mood of the sea in the pages of Anglo-Saxon literature is that of the never-to-be-forgotten storm with its concomitants of cold and darkness.

In an age in which security was extremely tenuous, men grouped together for collective protection in small, self-contained units. To them the sea was part of the little-known outer world from which natural and supernatural hostility could be expected. Not surprisingly, legend, helped by imagination, filled the place of knowledge, and in an age when dragons roamed the earth, it was natural to associate the sea with these creatures of the dark. A valid comparison may be made with this day and age, in which outer space, which holds a similar position, is populated with Grendel's cousins, beings born of the imagination.

Like outer space, the sea was tantalizingly unknown and full of possible dangers; it provided a challenge that is recorded in the annals of the Anglo-Saxons. This sea, which was seen in fairly standard terms of hostility, was used as a measure, particularly of the manhood of those

who ventured forth on or in its realm. As a result, certain Biblical personages such as Noah and the Children of Israel are magnified by Anglo-Saxon authors, who stressed the association with the sea, and one person, Beowulf, ascends to heroic heights by his conquest of all the sea's aspects. Even in casual references to the sea there is a hint of struggle, since ships are referred to as faithful "sea-steeds," and ordinary seamen receive extra respect.

In the explicitly Christian writings such as Exodus, Genesis A and Andreas the sea comes fully under divine control, where its subjugation serves to illustrate divine majesty. It is still a fierce and cruel sea but it does not work its own will. Since it often takes the part of an ally in these works, its feeling of menace, except to the enemy, is largely removed, and often it is used as a symbol for the world.

This use of the sea as a symbol for the world points forward to the more romantic feelings for the sea, which were to come later in Modern English literature, in which it is used as a symbol for freedom, human life, and eternity.¹ In Anglo-Saxon literature the characteristics of the sea that were to find greatest usage were ". . . those that would most strongly impress a people that had not yet taken the measure of it or in any sense made it their own--its storminess and hostility."²

FOOTNOTES

Abbreviations

<u>JEGP:</u>	<u>Journal of English and Germanic Philology</u>
<u>MAE:</u>	<u>Medium Aevum</u>
<u>MP:</u>	<u>Modern Philology</u>
<u>N&Q:</u>	<u>Notes and Queries</u>
<u>PMLA:</u>	<u>Publications of the Modern Language Association</u>
<u>RES:</u>	<u>Review of English Studies</u>

Introduction

¹Maple, "Sea," Man, Myth and Magic, 90, 2509.

²Gronbech, The Culture of the Teutons, I (London: Oxford University Press, 1931), pp. 176-177.

³Lewis, The Northern Seas (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1958), pp. 107-108.

⁴Bruce-Mitford, The Sutton-Hoo Ship-Burial (London: Trustees of the British Museum, 1968), pp. 40-41.

⁵Green in his book Sutton Hoo states that there is no evidence that the Anglo-Saxons of this era made use of sails (p. 51), but Lewis cites Sidonius and Procopius in support of his arguments that the ships used by the Saxons and Jutes had sails and were different from the Nydam type.

⁶Lewis (p. 241) relates an amusing anecdote from Rimbert's Vita Anskari in which King Harold of Denmark deserted his own Viking ship for that of Anskari, which had the comforts of a cabin.

⁷Green, Sutton Hoo (London: Merlin Press, 1963), p. 106.

⁸Sweet, ed., King Alfred's Orosius (London: N. Trübner, 1883), p. 17.

Chapter I

¹Treeneer, The Sea in Old English Literature: From Beowulf to Donne (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1926), p. 3.

²Wrenn, ed., Beowulf (London: Harrap, 1958), p. 190.

Wrenn states that "the phrase lagu-craeftig man could [refer to] either a pilot or Beowulf; but seamanship is likely to be attributed to such a hero, just as Moses in the Exodus crosses the Red Sea with all the qualities of a sailor." Fr. Klaeber in his edition Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburgh (Boston: D.C. Heath, 1950), p. 137, holds no such doubts; he states that the phrase refers to "Beowulf, who like Sigfrit, Nibel [ungenlied] 367, is an experienced seaman."

³Wrenn, p. 97. All quotations from Beowulf in this thesis are taken from this edition.

⁴Hall, trans., Beowulf and The Finnesburg Fragment (London: Allan and Unwin, 1967), p. 25. All translations from Beowulf in this thesis are taken from this edition.

⁵Brady, "The OE Nominal Compounds in -rad," PMLA, LXVII (1952), 559.

⁶Bonjour, "On Sea Images in Beowulf," JEGP, LIV (1955), 112.

⁷Mackie, ed., The Exeter Book, II (London: Oxford University Press, 1934), 66.

⁸Wright, "Good and Evil; Light and Darkness; Joy and Sorrow in Beowulf," RES (New Series), 8 (1957), 3.

⁹Wright, p. 4.

¹⁰Wrenn, p. 210.

¹¹See William W[itherle] Lawrence's articles, "The Haunted Mere in Beowulf," PMLA, XX (1912), 208-245, and "Grendel's Lair," JEGP, 38 (1939), 477-480, in which he argues against the mere's being part

of the sea, and W.S. Mackie's article, "The Demon's Home in Beowulf," JEGP, 37 (1938), 455-461, in which Mackie argues for the mere as an arm of the sea.

¹²See Beowulf, ll. 106-107.

¹³Earle, ed., Two of the Saxon Chronicles Parallel (Oxford: Clarendon, 1865), p. 59.

¹⁴Whitelock, ed., The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1961), p. 36.

¹⁵Whitelock, The Audience of 'Beowulf' (Oxford: Clarendon, 1951), p. 76.

¹⁶See Beowulf, ll. 1422-1423; 2138.

¹⁷Treeneer, p. 7.

¹⁸See Beowulf, ll. 1260-1261.

¹⁹Tolkien, "Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics," The Beowulf Poet, ed. Donald K. Dry (Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1968), p. 23.

²⁰Baird, "Unferth the ~~þ~~yle" MAE, 39 (1970), 9.

²¹See Beowulf, l. 510.

²²Lawrence, "The Breca Episode in Beowulf," Anniversary Papers by Colleagues and Pupils of George Lyman Kittredge (New York: Russell and Russell, 1967), p. 362.

²³Brady, p. 568.

²⁴Bonjour, p. 113.

²⁵Brady, "The Synonyms for 'Sea' in Beowulf," Studies in Honor of Albert Marey Sturtevant (Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1952), p. 27.

²⁶See Beowulf, ll. 227-228.

²⁷Chambers, Beowulf (Cambridge: University Press, 1963), p. 467.

²⁸Chambers, pp. 476-477.

Chapter II

¹Magoun, ed., The Vercelli Book Poems (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard, 1960), p. 6.

²Kennedy, trans., Early English Christian Poetry (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963), pp. 126-127.

³Magoun, p. 8.

⁴Kennedy, pp. 128-129.

⁵Irving, ed., The Old English 'Exodus' (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953), p. 92.

⁶Mackie translates grundas as "plains," but I have changed to the word "abyss" which is used by Wyld in his article "Diction and Imagery in Anglo-Saxon Poetry" (Bessinger and Kahrl, Essential Articles: Old English Poetry, p. 194). Clark Hall lists both meanings for grundas.

⁷Mackie, ed., The Exeter Book, II (London: Oxford University Press, 1934), 52-53.

⁸Magoun, pp. 36-37.

⁹Kennedy, pp. 154-155.

¹⁰Gollancz, ed., The Exeter Book, I (London: Kegan Paul, 1895), pp. 288-289.

¹¹Trener, The Sea in Old English Literature: From Beowulf to Donne (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1926), p. 16.

¹²Mackie, pp. 2-3.

¹³Gradon, ed., Cynewulf's 'Elene' (London: Methuen, 1958), p. 36.

¹⁴Kennedy, The Poems of Cynewulf (New York: Peter Smith, 1949), pp. 94-95.

- ¹⁵Mackie, pp. 88-89.
- ¹⁶Ibid., pp. 90-91.
- ¹⁷Ibid., pp. 90-93.
- ¹⁸Morris, ed., The Blickling Homilies of the Tenth Century (London: N. Trübner, 1880), pp. 232-233.
- ¹⁹Magoun, p. 11.
- ²⁰Kennedy, Early English Christian Poetry, pp. 131-132.
- ²¹Mackie, pp. 2-3.
- ²²Skemp, "Transformation of Scripture in Anglo-Saxon Poetry," MP, V (1906-07), 21.
- ²³Mackie, pp. 62-63.
- ²⁴Wyld, "Diction and Imagery in Anglo-Saxon Poetry," in Essential Articles for the Study of Old English Poetry, ed. Jess. B. Bessinger, Jr., and Stanley J. Kahrl (Hamden: Archon, 1968), p. 193.
- ²⁵Krapp, ed., The Junius Manuscript (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931), p. 6.
- ²⁶Huppé, Doctrine and Poetry (Albany: State University of New York, 1959), p. 148.
- ²⁷Ibid., p. 145.
- ²⁸Wyld, p. 225.
- ²⁹Krapp, p. 41
- ³⁰Cook, ed., The Old English Elene, Phoenix, and Physiologus (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1919), p. lxi.
- ³¹Mackie, pp. 124-125.
- ³²Ibid., pp. 2-3.

³³Ibid., pp. 44-45.

³⁴Treeneer, p. 1.

Chapter III

¹Earle, ed., Two of the Saxon Chronicles Parallel (Oxford: Clarendon), p. 95.

²Whitelock, ed., The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1961), p. 57.

³Earle, p. 78.

⁴Whitelock, p. 48.

⁵Mackie, ed., The Exeter Book, II (London: Oxford University Press, 1934), 154-155.

⁶Mackie, pp. 38-41.

⁷Whitelock, rev., Sweet's Anglo-Saxon Reader (Oxford: Clarendon, 1967), p. 53.

⁸Magoun, ed., The Vercelli Book Poems (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard, 1960), p. 8.

⁹Cook et al., Translations from The Old English (New Haven: Yale, 1921), p. 225.

¹⁰Garmonsway, ed., Ælfric's Colloquy (London: Methuen, 1939), p. 33.

¹¹Cook and Tinker, eds., Select Translations From Old English Prose (Boston: Sinn, 1908), p. 182.

¹²Liebermann, ed., Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen, I (Scientia Aalen, 1960), p. 458.

¹³Gollancz, ed., The Exeter Book, I (London: Kegan Paul, 1895), pp. 42-43.

- ¹⁴Wyld, "Diction and Imagery in Anglo-Saxon Poetry," p. 197.
- ¹⁵Krapp, ed., The Junius Manuscript (New York: Columbia, 1931), p. 45.
- ¹⁶Cook et al., Translations from The Old English (New Haven: Yale, 1921), p. 161.
- ¹⁷Krapp, p. 46.
- ¹⁸Cook et al., p. 162-163.
- ¹⁹Eaton, The Bible Beautiful (An edition, for general use, of the Douay Version of the Old Testament) (London: Longmans, 1930), p. 67.
- ²⁰Irving, ed., The Old English 'Exodus' (New Haven Yale, 1953), p. 74.
- ²¹Irving, pp. 52-53.
- ²²Gordon, trans., Anglo-Saxon Poetry (London: Dent, 1970), p. 115.
- ²³Magoun, p. 9.
- ²⁴Kennedy, trans., Early English Christian Poetry (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 130.
- ²⁵Magoun, p. 50.
- ²⁶Kennedy, p. 167.
- ²⁷Stanley, "The Search for Anglo-Saxon Paganism--II," N&Q, (July, 1964), 244.
- ²⁸Magoun, p. 14.
- ²⁹Kennedy, p. 134.

Chapter IV

¹Skemp, "Transformation of Scripture in Anglo-Saxon Poetry," MP, V (1906-07), 19.

²Skemp, p. 10.

³Krapp, ed., The Junius Manuscript (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931), p. 43.

⁴Cook, et al., trans., Translations From the Old English (New Haven: Archon Books, 1970), p. 160.

⁵Trener, The Sea in Old English Literature: From Beowulf to Donne (London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1926), p. 28.

⁶Krapp, ed., The Junius Manuscript (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931), pp. 6-7.

⁷Cook et al., pp. 144-145.

⁸Magoun, ed., The Vercelli Book Poems (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 1960), p. 6.

⁹Kennedy, trans., Early English Christian Poetry (New York: Oxford University Press, 1963), p. 127.

(Kennedy uses the past tense but I have restored the present tense to agree more closely with the original.)

¹⁰Magoun, p. 13.

¹¹Kennedy, pp. 133-134.

¹²Magoun, pp. 11-12.

¹³Kennedy, p. 132.

¹⁴Magoun, p. 15.

¹⁵Kennedy, pp. 135-136.

¹⁶Magoun, p. 45.

¹⁷Kennedy, pp. 162-163.

¹⁸Krapp, p. 42.

¹⁹Grant, ed., MS. C.C.C.41 (University of Cambridge. Dept. of English. Ph.D. dissertation 7547), 1971, pp. 171-171a.

²⁰Cook, ed., The Christ of Cynewulf (Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1964), p. 33.

²¹Kennedy, p. 109.

²²Smithers, "The Meaning of The Seafarer and The Wanderer," MA, 3 (1957), 151.

Conclusion

¹Bourke, The Sea as a Symbol in English Poetry (Eton: Alden and Blackwell, 1954), p. 6.

²Bourke, p. 3.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

1. Books

- Anderson, George. The Literature of the Anglo-Saxons. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1966.
- Blair, Peter Hunter. An Introduction to Anglo-Saxon England. Cambridge: University Press, 1966.
- Bourke, John. The Sea as a Symbol in English Poetry. Eton: Alden and Blackwell, 1954.
- Brooks, Kenneth R., ed. Andreas and The Fates of the Apostles. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1961.
- Bruce-Mitford, R.L.S. The Sutton-Hoo Ship-Burial. London: The Trustees of the British Museum, 1968.
- Chambers, R.W. Beowulf. An Introduction to the Study of the Poem. Third Edition. With a supplement by C.L. Wrenn. Cambridge: University Press, 1963.
- Clark Hall, John R. Beowulf and the Finnesburg Fragment. London: George Allen and Unwin, 1967.
- Cook, Albert S., ed. The Christ of Cynewulf. Hamden: Archon Books, 1964.
- _____, ed. The Old English Elene, Phoenix and Physiologus. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1919.
- _____, and Chauncey B. Tinker, eds. Select Translations From Old English Prose. Boston: Ginn and Co., 1908.
- _____, et al., eds. Translations from the Old English. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1921.
- Earle, John, ed. Two of the Saxon Chronicles Parallel. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1865.
- Eaton, Mother Mary, ed. The Bible Beautiful. London: Longmans, Green and Co., 1930.
- Garmonsway, G.B., ed. Aelfric's Colloquy. London: Methuen, 1939.

- Gollancz, Israel, ed. The Exeter Book, I. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., 1895.
- Gordon, R.K. Anglo-Saxon Poetry. London: Dent, 1970.
- Gradon, P.O.E., ed. Cynewulf's 'Elene'. London: Methuen, 1958.
- Grant, R.J.S., ed. MS. C.C.C.C.41. Diss. Cambridge. 7547. Edmonton; 1971.
- Green, Charles. Sutton Hoo. London: Merlin Press, 1963.
- Greenfield, Stanley B. A Critical History of Old English Literature. New York: New York University Press, 1968.
- Gronbech, Vilhelm. The Culture of the Teutons. London: Humphrey Milford, [1931].
- Huppé, Bernard Felix. Doctrine and Poetry. Albany: State University of New York, 1959.
- Irving, Edward Burroughs, Jr., ed. The Old English Exodus. New Haven: Yale University Press, 1953.
- Kennedy, Charles W. Early English Christian Poetry. New York: Oxford University Press, 1963.
- _____. The Caedmon Poems: Translated into English Prose Verse. Gloucester, Mass.: Peter Smith, 1965.
- _____. The Poems of Cynewulf. New York: Peter Smith, 1949.
- Klaeber, Fr., ed. Beowulf and the Fight at Finnsburg. Boston: D.C. Heath, 1950.
- Krapp, George Philip, ed. The Junius Manuscript. New York: Columbia University Press, 1931.
- Lewis, Archibald R. The Northern Seas. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1958.
- Liebermann, F[elix], ed. Die Gesetze der Angelsachsen. [Berlin]: Scientia Aalen, 1960.
- Loyn, H.R. Anglo-Saxon England and the Norman Conquest. London: Longmans, 1963.
- Mackie, W.S., ed. The Exeter Book II. London: Humphrey Milford, 1934.
- Magoun, Francis P., Jr., ed. The Vercelli Book Poems. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University, 1960.

- Morris, Rev. R., ed. The Blickling Homilies of the Tenth Century. London: Trübner, 1880.
- Sweet, Henry, ed. King Alfred's Orosius, I. London: Trübner, 1883.
- Treeneer, Anne. The Sea in Old English Literature: From Beowulf to Donne. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1926.
- Whitelock, Dorothy, rev. Sweet's Anglo-Saxon Reader. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1967.
- _____, ed. The Anglo-Saxon Chronicle. London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1961.
- _____, The Audience of 'Beowulf'. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1951.
- Wrenn, C.L., ed. Beowulf with the Finnesburg Fragment. London: George Harrap, 1958.

2. Articles

- Baird, Joseph L. "Unferth the þyle," MAE, 39 (1970), 1-12.
- Bonjour, Adrien. "On Sea Images in Beowulf," JEGP, 54 (1955), 111-115.
- Brady, Cardine. "The OE Nominal Compounds in -rad," PMLA, 67 (1952), 538-571.
- _____. "The Synonyms for 'Sea' in Beowulf," Studies in Honor of Albert Morey Sturtevant. Lawrence: University of Kansas Press, 1952, pp. 22-46.
- Cross, J.E. and S.I. Tucker. "Allegorical Tradition and the Old English Exodus," Neophilologus, 44 (1960), 122-127.
- Lawrence, William Witherle. "The Breca Episode in Beowulf," Anniversary Papers by Colleagues and Pupils of George Lyman Kittredge. New York: Russell and Russell, 1967, pp. 359-366.
- _____. "The Haunted Mere in Beowulf," PMLA, 20 (1912), 208-245.
- Mackie, W.S. "The Demons' Home in Beowulf," JEGP, 37 (1938), 455-461.
- Maple, Eric. "Sea," Man, Myth and Magic, 90, 2509-2515.

- Skemp, Arthur R. "Transformation of Scripture in Anglo-Saxon Poetry," MP, 4 (1906-07), 423-470.
- Smithers, G.C. "The Meaning of The Seafarer and The Wanderer," MAE, 26 (1957), 137-153.
- Stanley, E.G. "The Search for Anglo-Saxon Paganism--I," N&Q (July 1964), 242-250.
- Tolkien, J.R.R. "Beowulf: The Monsters and the Critics," The Beowulf Poet. A Collection of Critical Essays, ed. by Donald K. Fry. Englewood Cliffs: Prentice-Hall, 1968, pp. 8-56.
- Wright, Herbert G. "Good and Evil; Light and Darkness; Joy and Sorrow in Beowulf," RES (New Series), 8 (1957), 1-11.
- Wyld, Henry Cecil. "Diction and Imagery in Anglo-Saxon Poetry," in Essential Articles for the Study of Old English Poetry, edited by Jess B. Bessinger and Stanley J. Kahrl. Hamden, Connecticut: Archon Books, 1968, pp. 183-227.

B30027